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CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)
[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the House of Commons Report to Canadians for 2014.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in relation to Bill C-2, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

* * *

PETITIONS

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition on behalf of constituents.

The petitioners note that 92% of Canadians believe sex-selective pregnancy termination should be illegal. They call on the House of Commons to condemn discrimination against unborn girls occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination.

[Translation]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I have a few petitions here to present.

I would like to begin by thanking Donald Haney, Pierrette Desrosiers, and Monique Desrochers for sending me these petitions regarding the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The petitioners are saying that our national broadcaster is a key player that fulfills an important role in showcasing the reality of Canada's regions. They are also saying that our public broadcaster reflects our diverse realities and can benefit from a shared national spirit.

The petitioners are therefore calling on the Government of Canada to maintain stable and predictable long-term core funding for the public broadcaster, including English and French radio, in support of its unique and crucial role.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PROTECTION OF CANADA FROM TERRORISTS ACT

BILL C-44—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to Bill—

The Speaker: The hon. member for London—Fanshawe is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my apologies, but I have a report from the interparliamentary delegation that I would like to present to the House.

The Speaker: We have already gone through that rubric, so the hon. member will require unanimous consent to revert. Is there unanimous consent to revert to presenting reports from interparliamentary delegations?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my thanks to the House for being so gracious.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union respecting its participation at the steering committee of the Twelve Plus Group held in Berlin, Germany, on September 22, 2014, and the seminar on ending violence against women and girls, held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on September 23 to 26, 2014.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PROTECTION OF CANADA FROM TERRORISTS ACT

BILL C-44—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to Bill C-44, An Act to amend the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and other Acts, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the Bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said Bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the Bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker: There will now be a 30-minute question period. I would ask members to keep their questions to around a minute and government responses to a similar length of time.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is another sad day in the House of Commons. The government is using the guillotine for the 81st time since coming to power. Eighty-one times. Never in the history of Canada has any government shown such disrespect for the work of parliamentarians and the need to review the bills that are introduced in the House of Commons.

[English]

We are talking about a bill that the government itself has said is an important one, a complex one that requires proper scrutiny; yet after only a few hours of debate and after only a handful of members of Parliament have had the opportunity to speak, the government is imposing closure for the 81st time. Perhaps this time more egregiously than any time before, the government is simply refusing to have the proper scrutiny that needs to take place in the House of Commons. Given the impacts on Canadian society, the bill needs to be properly scrutinized.

My question is very simple. Eighty-one times now, the government has imposed closure. It does it at the drop of a hat,

after only a few hours of debate. Why is it trying to do it this time when it is well aware that it has the sad record of having more pieces of legislation rejected by the courts than any other government in our history? Given the fact that the government has had shoddy legislation that needed improvement and has been rejected by the courts, why is it imposing closure yet again?

• (1010)

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the member for Burnaby—New Westminster for his question. I used to work with him on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. I am glad to have the opportunity today to rise in the House to answer his questions and make some progress on a bill that is, frankly, very straightforward.

I have the bill here, and it is just four pages long. It is really very simple. We have already spent more than six hours debating it in the House, and basically, its purpose is to clarify the scope of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service's mandate so that it can protect Canadians.

Of course I will be happy to answer my colleagues' questions for the next few minutes, but the best place for that is at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, which can study the bill and bring in witnesses.

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues from the official opposition and the other opposition party for supporting this bill in principle. I hope that we will be able to move it forward quickly because the service needs this clarification right now so that it can protect Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what has become very clear over the last few years is that, ever since the Conservatives obtained majority government, the current government House leader seems to have one mode in passing legislation here in the House of Commons, and that is to use the tool of time allocation. To list few of them, there was the Canadian Wheat Board pool registration, copyright legislation, back-to-work legislation, free trade agreements, first nations legislation, and massive budget bills, which are an abuse in themselves.

As has been pointed out, no government in the history of Canada has used time allocation as much as this government has. It is almost like a normal part of the process. It is wrong. It is disrespectful to democracy and the functionality of the chamber.

Government Orders

My question for the government House leader is this. Why does he believe his government needs to use time allocation on its legislation as opposed to allowing members of Parliament—through the normal, traditional practices that the House used prior to the majority Conservative government—to adequately debate the bills before they go to committee or even pass at third reading?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the bill is seven pages long, which, as I said before, makes it a very simple bill.

We want to send it to committee for debate because we need to pass it in order to protect Canadians. Furthermore, both opposition parties expressed support in principle for this bill, which would clarify the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

The service has been around for 30 years, but it was never explicit that the people in charge of keeping us safe could operate here in the country as well as abroad. This is all the more important considering a growing phenomenon related to terrorist threats: high-risk travellers and foreign fighters.

That is what makes this bill so important: it will enable judicial authorities to clearly define the scope within which authorities and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service can exercise their powers while remaining in compliance with Canadian law.

As we have seen, this bill already contains provisions for court oversight of the process.

•(1015)

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again I am disappointed in the government's attitude. As I have said before in this House, it seems that the government regards debate as something it has to suffer through until it gets its way, instead of an exchange of ideas that are important not only to improve legislation but also to let Canadians know what issues are at stake here in the House of Commons.

My question for the minister has to do with the fact that he has referred to the committee as the right place to examine this bill. What I would like to hear from him now is a commitment that the government will not impose time allocation and severely limit the number of witnesses at committee, because although it is a short bill, it is quite an important bill in terms of national security. Will the minister give a commitment today that the government will not impose time allocation in committee or try to limit the number of witnesses who appear?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

As he knows, committees are masters of their own destiny. It will be up to the committee to make decisions. However, there is consensus on this bill.

As legislators, we have the responsibility to provide the tools required by both the police and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to protect us in compliance with Canadian laws.

Freedom requires a safe and secure environment. This bill very clearly seeks to provide that. It will define the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service at home and abroad, and provide a clear definition of “witness”, the very basis for the information on which CSIS files are based.

It is also important to have reliable information, because the information collected by CSIS is precisely what enables us to build cases and collect evidence leading to the indictment and incarceration of convicted terrorists, so that they are brought to justice.

Unfortunately, the NDP did not support our bill to combat terrorism. However, this time, it is interesting to note that they are more receptive to the bill. They have indicated that they will support it. It is therefore very important to closely examine it now. The parliamentary committee is the best forum in which to do so, and we will have the opportunity to comment on it and debate the final version of the bill once it returns to the House.

Given that this bill is important to the safety and security of Canadians, that parliamentarians support it and that there are no significant objections, I invite the opposition parties to support it so that we can go to committee and move forward with this bill, which is important for the security of Canadians.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is the 81st time the government has imposed time allocation on the study of a bill. I take issue with this, particularly in the case of Bill C-44, because ever since the events of October 20 and 22, Canadians have been asking themselves a lot of questions about the way Parliament works and especially about the laws it wants to pass to deal with radicalization and give more tools to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and about what is happening with regard to the RCMP and border services.

Many people across Canada are asking themselves many questions and would like their MP to be able to take part in this debate to share their questions or thoughts on such an important bill. Of course, Bill C-44 is just a few pages long, but those pages are extremely important and will change the way CSIS operates. The question I have for the minister is the following: why muzzle the opposition MPs, and government MPs for that matter, and prevent them from properly representing their constituents, especially when Canadians are concerned and want us to make better laws following the events of this past October?

•(1020)

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I thank my opposition colleague for the question.

Why act? We must act because we all witnessed the tragic events that occurred near here and an attack that ended in this Parliament on October 22. We also know that on October 20, a Quebecker, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, lost his life because he was wearing a Canadian Forces uniform in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu.

Government Orders

These events remind us that the terrorist threat in Canada is real. An act of terrorism is an act committed by a person who attacks a symbol of Canada, a symbol of power, or a symbol of our democracy. It is an act committed for political, ideological or religious purposes. That is what happened here, in Parliament. President François Hollande talked about that not far from here, and he condemned these acts of violence. He said that together, we must take action. That is why we are working with the French minister of the interior, Bernard Cazeneuve, and with our U.S. counterpart, Jeh Johnson.

As legislators, it is our job to put the necessary tools in place. It is important to take action. Let us be clear: we indicated that we would not over-react, nor would we stand by and leave Canadians defenceless against evolving terrorists threats. That is why we introduced Bill C-44, and that is why we plan on implementing other measures to protect Canadians and democracy. That is why, and in particular with this bill, we always do so in compliance with our country's fundamental laws. That is why, in this bill, clause 7 provides that anyone facing charges based on information from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service has the right to an amicus curiae, a friend of the court, and access to legal provisions and also provides that everything is overseen by a court. This is a balanced bill, and my colleague will have the opportunity to ask questions in committee as soon as the House decides to send this bill to committee.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness made some interesting comments, but in my opinion they were way off base, simply because Bill C-44 was not introduced in response to the events of October 22. This needs to be clear to anyone watching us.

I am still trying to understand, from the lengthy remarks he has made since the debate on the time allocation motion began, why the motion was moved. Was it because the official opposition and the second opposition party are dragging their feet and getting carried away? No. To date, there has been six hours of debate at second reading. If anything, it is the government that is dragging its feet, and I would like to hear the minister's comments on the fact that since 2007, since the Supreme Court's decision in *R. v. Hape*, the government has known that it had to change certain laws and some of CSIS's powers. Why did the government take so long to do that and now, all of a sudden, it is introducing this legislation in order to give us the impression that it introduced the bill as a result of the events of October 22? Why use a time allocation motion to suggest that the only way to examine this major bill, which grants very significant powers to some of Canada's law enforcement agencies, is to bypass the entire parliamentary process, which is different from the process in committee? I have not heard any convincing arguments, besides the fact that the government is the one that has been dragging its feet for all these years. The Conservatives have had a majority since 2011, and if they really cared about the country's security, they would have taken measures long before now.

• (1025)

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question posed by the member opposite is quite simple. She agrees with the bill. The Liberals agree with the bill. We have already debated it for six hours here in the House. Committee is the best forum in which to amend bills.

Today, the debate is not about passing the bill. It is simply about moving it on to the next step so that it can be thoroughly debated. Why? Because, whether we are members of the government or an opposition party, Canadians elected us to pass bills once they have been debated. That is what we have done in the House and that is what we are going to do in committee.

I understand that the two opposition parties support this bill. For that reason, which seems very clear to me, we should immediately adjourn this debate and send the bill to committee so that we can take action to protect Canadians. That is why we were elected to Parliament.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think we all know that haste is rarely a wise adviser. Before I address the House, I must say that I am really confused. I am wondering whether I should be talking about the bill or the time allocation motion, given that the time I have to speak will be cut short, perhaps even drastically reduced, in the next few hours, and this is true for many of my colleagues in the House. That is the fundamental problem we should be talking about first, before we begin discussing Bill C-44.

The Conservatives are telling 308 members, minus the few who have already had a chance to speak, that they only have a few hours left, they are to share the time that remains, and that is just how our democracy works. They are also telling members that the best way to advance a bill is through committee. What is the message here? The message they are sending is that the opinions, views, expertise and knowledge of all the members of the House, who were elected to debate each and every bill, do not matter.

After 81 time allocation motions, this has to stop. There is absolutely no reason why parliamentarians should not have the right to speak and why this bill should not take its course, even though, for now, we agree that it should be sent to committee and we plan to support it at second reading. This means that we want to be able to discuss it in committee and presumably propose amendments. However, let us face it, if the past is any indication, amendments are rarely accepted, as though the government always knows better.

Would Bill C-44 not be a perfect opportunity to show all Canadians that the parliamentary system can work, and that there are some subjects that transcend partisanship and should be allowed to go through the process, allowing all authorities to have their say, within reason and within the confines of our parliamentary system, and ensure that in the end, it is no longer a government bill but in fact a bill of this Parliament?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. He reminded us that 140 individuals with connections to the country are currently suspected of having been involved in terrorist activities abroad.

Government Orders

Under current rules, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service does not necessarily have the authority to investigate these people who are a threat to our safety. This is about clarifying powers, as I said. The court invited us to clarify those powers. Opposition colleagues had the opportunity to attend a briefing before the bill was introduced.

This bill was scheduled for introduction on October 22. It is on schedule. We have the support of both opposition parties. This balanced bill contains provisions that clarify the service's roles and protect citizens' rights.

I am eager to see this bill go to committee, and I am eager to see it come back to the House so that we can pass it and it can go to the Senate, where it will be debated again, become law, receive royal assent, and become an effective tool for protecting Canadians. The terrorist threat is undeniably real. We have to take meaningful action against it and make sure Canadians are protected.

• (1030)

[English]

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP): Mr. Speaker, of course on this side of the House we are concerned about the protection of Canadians, but this is an ongoing thing. The greatest terrorist act committed in this country was Air India, decades ago. We have not seen an incident like that since. We need to look with a great deal of scrutiny at the types of powers that we are giving to the state. The symbol of Canada, really, I think to most people, is the rights of Canadians. That is the real symbol to Canadians. That is what Canadians hold most dear.

The debate that we are having today and that we should be having on any increased security is a matter of principle. That is what we talk about at second reading of bills in the House of Commons. We talk about the principles that we are acting on in this country. We speak about the reasons we do things. This is important. This brings out the debate for Canadians. Canadians have a right to hear the debate about security and the nature of security as it impacts on our rights as Canadians. They absolutely have a right to that debate, and we should have that debate today, because, of course, the subject is very topical with the incidents that have occurred in Parliament.

Why would we close this debate off when it is such an interesting and important one for Canadians? Why would we want to send the bill to committee immediately when we are talking about the principles involved in the relationship between security and human rights? Why would we want to foreclose that debate? Why would Canadians not want to hear us talk about this in their House of Commons?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, let me remind my hon. colleague what I said in my very first speech in support of this bill in the House a few weeks ago. I said that we will never turn our backs on the fundamental Canadian values of respect for individual rights and the rule of law. While this bill gives our national security agencies some of the tools they need to protect Canada from terrorists, clause 7, on proposed subsection 18.1(4), of the legislation I introduced then ensures that the right to a fair trial is protected in all cases.

I invite my hon. colleague to take a look at proposed paragraphs 18.1(4)(a) and (b). There are also some provisions in the bill that go

in exactly the same direction, suggesting that we clarify the role of our intelligence agencies while protecting the rights of Canadians. That is exactly what this bill would do. That is why the hon. member's party has indicated it is willing to support this bill. So is the second opposition party.

This is a great bill that would help improve the safety of Canadians while protecting their rights. That is why we need to have this debate. We need to send the bill to committee so that we can go more in depth and make this the law of the land.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak. We will take advantage of that while we can.

Even though the minister thinks that the committee is supreme, will he at least agree to televising the committee's meetings?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, once again, I believe that this NDP member has a great deal of respect for the power of committees and elected officials, and it is up to the committees to discuss this issue. I had the opportunity to do so when I was chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Now I have the opportunity to invite my colleague to support this bill. It will ensure the safety and security of Canadians and is in keeping with our policy direction since the events of September 11, 2001, which made terrorism the greatest threat to the security of our country.

Thanks to CSIS and our police forces, we foiled terrorist plots in Canada, including the attacks of the Toronto 18 and the attacks on the British Columbia legislature and VIA Rail. We thwarted those attacks with the laws we put in place, and those terrorists are facing charges. Some have been sent to jail because of the laws we instituted.

Therefore, it is important to debate bills, but it is also important to take action, especially when the terrorist threat is real and, unfortunately, has already created victims in our country. As parliamentarians we have the responsibility to act.

I have full confidence in the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security and all its members, and I trust they will review this bill and bring it back to the House so that we can adopt it at third reading, send it to the Senate and make it a law that will protect Canadians.

Government Orders

●(1035)

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the minister, I think there are a couple of things in his statement that may inadvertently mislead the public. One is that the government likes to talk about six hours of debate. How many people does that actually accommodate in the House of Commons? It is 16. Sixteen people means that about 5% of the members of the House of Commons have actually been able to debate the bill. Six hours sounds long until we actually look at the number of people participating.

The second way I think he might inadvertently mislead the public is the question of committees being the masters of their own houses. His parliamentary secretary came to the public safety committee on Bill C-2 the last time with very severe limits on the debate, limiting the opposition to four witnesses and actually limiting the time we could spend debating each clause of the bill to one and a half minutes per member. This was obviously a travesty of a debate in committee.

Again I am asking the minister for a commitment from the government that it will not use its majority on the committee to restrict debate in the committee on this important bill.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I already answered my colleague's question. The committee is master of its own destiny. That much is clear.

I am not a member of that committee, but any time the committee so desires, I make an effort to take part. I had the opportunity to go to committee meetings and have productive discussions. That is what we did a few weeks ago, when the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service came to present a status update on the terrorist threat.

It is important to take a sensible and responsible approach. That is what we are being asked to do today by supporting this motion, so that this important bill, which has the approval of all the political parties in the House, may go to committee. Then we could debate it, do a clause-by-clause review, and bring it back to the House to enact it and give the country a new law.

Every parliamentarian was shaken by what happened on October 22. That is one of the reasons we have this opportunity to pass a well-constructed, balanced bill that will ensure the safety of Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

The question is on the motion.

[English]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Call in the members.

●(1120)

(The House divided on the motion which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 275)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Baird	Barlow
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chong	Clarke
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Poillievre

Government Orders

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, government orders will be extended by 30 minutes today.

SECOND READING

The House resumed from November 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, An Act to amend the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

It gives me great pleasure to stand today and speak to Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act. We have heard in these debates that this bill contains amendments to the CSIS Act and technical amendments to the Strengthening Canada's Citizenship Act. My remarks today will focus on the amendments to the CSIS Act and why we are taking steps to give this vital agency the tools it needs to conduct investigations out of Canada related to threats to the security of Canada.

First I would like to speak to the global terrorist threat, the impacts here at home, and the steps Canada is taking to address that threat.

Acts of terror and murder have been carried out across the globe by extremist groups that have no regard for the lives of innocent people. In fact, we have all witnessed in the past weeks that Canada was the victim of two terrorist attacks within the span of one week. Because of radical Islamist terrorism, we lost two fine soldiers: Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, who was laid to rest this past weekend.

Terrorists kill people from all walks of life, including people from communities they claim to represent. Significant work has been done over the past decade, in particular since September 11, 2001, to counter terrorist activities. Canada has been a leader in global counterterrorism efforts. We have citizens and civil society organizations representing people of all faiths and beliefs. They work among themselves and with our government to prevent terrorism by building stronger and more resilient communities. All of these measures were captured within the four pillars of Canada's counterterrorism strategy: prevent, detect, deny, and respond. That strategy will serve us well on the difficult road we face ahead as our Canadian Armed Forces engage in a campaign to degrade and destroy the threat that ISIL poses to western civilization.

Indeed, our security agencies have been monitoring groups like al Qaeda and ISIL closely for years. We have taken concrete measures to disrupt and prevent violent and extremist activities. This is a comprehensive approach. While we join our allies in air strikes, we are also taking other measures that are working to help isolate ISIL and deny it and its partners resources, including funds and new recruits.

Let me explain.

Preston
Reid
Richards
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Sweet
Trost
Truppe
Valcourt
Van Loan
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Yurdiga

Rajotte
Rempel
Rickford
Saxton
Seeback
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
Strahl
Toet
Trottier
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer— 144

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Ashton
Ayala
Bennett
Bevington
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Brosseau
Casey
Chan
Chicoine
Choquette
Cleary
Côté
Cullen
Day
Dion
Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseauit
Eyking
Freeland
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Goodale
Groguhé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes
Julian
Lapointe
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Masse
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Nantel
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Perreault
Rafferty
Rathgeber
Raynault
Rousseau
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Toone
Trudeau
Valeriotte

Angus
Aubin
Bélangier
Benskin
Blanchette
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brisson
Caron
Cash
Charlton
Chisholm
Christopherson
Comartin
Crowder
Cuzner
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Foote
Garneau
Genest
Giguère
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Jones
Lamoureux
Latendresse
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Nicholls
Pacetti
Péclet
Pilon
Rankin
Ravignat
Regan
Sandhu
Scott
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Stoffer
Thibeault
Tremblay
Turmel
Vaughan— 110

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As we know, terrorists need money, media access, weapons, and explosives among their resources to sustain themselves. We want to make sure that all groups that would assist terrorist organizations are restricted from doing so. Preventing terrorists from using the global financial system to commit an act of terror is essential in helping to suppress these groups. Therefore, we have certain provisions under the Criminal Code that we can use to deal with the assets and the operations of groups that support terrorist activities. Listing these entities under the Criminal Code is a public means of identifying a group or an individual as being associated with terrorism, and listing carries significant consequences. Once listed, an entity's assets are frozen and may be subject to seizure, restraint, or forfeiture.

Further, it is an offence for Canadians at home or abroad to knowingly participate in or contribute to, directly or indirectly, any activities that facilitate the activities of a listed terrorist entity. We know that terrorist groups are inspiring westerners to take up arms in support of their cause. In order to reach the individuals and guard against these tactics, we work closely with diverse communities, including through cross-cultural round tables on security.

We are working with leaders in communities right across the country to help engage Canadians in a long-term dialogue on matters related to national security, particularly in countering violent extremism. Through the round table, we have reached out to hundreds of respected cultural and religious leaders who have their finger on the pulse of their communities. These leaders have been integral to helping law enforcement and security agencies to address threats and identify the best ways of reaching individuals who may be leaning toward violent behaviour and redirecting them from the paths of radicalization that lead to violence.

● (1125)

However, rapid changes in technology, ease of communications, and the mobility of terrorist travellers have created new and complex challenges for Canada and all our allies as we work to keep our citizens safe.

As in other countries, despite everyone's best efforts, a small but significant number of individuals have left Canada to join terrorist groups in the Middle East. Denying ISIL its new recruits also means using Canadian law to crack down on those so-called extremist travellers. We brought forward the Combating Terrorism Act to make it an offence to leave Canada to take part in terrorist activities, and laws are in place to revoke the passports of Canadians who travel abroad to join extremist groups.

Both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness have stated clearly that our government will continue to look at ways to help our national security agencies to investigate and track the activities of terrorists at our borders and beyond. One of the ways to do this is with the legislation that is before us today, which would amend the existing CSIS Act so that we would be better able to provide CSIS with the tools it needs to investigate threats to the security of Canada wherever those threats occur and ultimately to protect the security of Canadians.

It is important to note that the CSIS Act was created three decades ago. It was the age of the rotary phone, when our world was under the shadow of the Cold War. The act is in need of updates and upgrades that would confirm the authority of CSIS to investigate

Canadian extremists and other threats abroad. That is why I urge members to support the bill that is before them.

The protection of Canada from terrorists act would confirm that CSIS has the authority to operate outside of Canada when investigating threats to the security of Canada or when conducting investigations for the purpose of security assessment. It would confirm as well that the Federal Court has the authority to issue warrants authorizing CSIS to conduct activities outside of Canada without regard to the laws of the other states. This new legislation would also reinforce CSIS's statutory authority to investigate threats abroad and that when issuing a warrant, judges would only need to consider relevant Canadian law, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the CSIS Act, and not foreign laws.

Clearly there are a number of ways our government protects the safety and security of Canada against terrorism, but first we must be sure that we have the right tools in place for our security intelligence agencies to do so. There is no time to waste. We must amend the CSIS Act and allow this vital agency to continue its work.

I urge members in this House to join me in supporting this bill.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to ask my colleague opposite a question about Bill C-44, particularly since we just voted on the 81st gag order imposed by the Conservatives, which I find very sad for our democracy.

Let us come back to Bill C-44 and the proposals it contains. I had the opportunity to examine it in a bit more detail and to see what measures it contains. We still have a lot of questions about some extremely technical terms. What caught my attention about this bill is the fact that it is about the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and, although it is only four or five pages long, it is an omnibus bill. It is very disappointing that the Conservatives did this. Part of this bill deals with the Immigration Act and has nothing to do with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

I would like to know whether my colleague opposite would be prepared to divide the bill so that we can address only the aspects that deal with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and not those that deal with the Immigration Act.

● (1130)

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Daniel: Mr. Speaker, obviously everything would be impacted by this act, including immigration. It is important that we integrate all of those things into this bill to make sure that we cover what is needed to prevent terrorist acts against Canada and Canadians throughout the globe.

Mr. David McQuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question for my colleague relates to the good work done by my colleague from Vancouver Quadra and her private member's bill.

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This is a wonderful opportunity for the government to join the ranks of most industrialized countries and our Five Eyes partners, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. The government can pick up the import of the bill that my colleague from Vancouver Quadra is bringing forward and insert it into this bill or bring it forward as another legislative instrument. The government could thus set up an all-party parliamentary committee to oversee the work of CSIS.

This is the case with Capitol Hill in the United States, with Westminster in the U.K., and with all of our Five Eyes partners. Why is the government not taking advantage of the wonderful work in the member's bill to join the ranks of our partners and get this right?

Mr. Joe Daniel: Mr. Speaker, there is quite a bit of oversight already for CSIS through the various committees, et cetera, that we have, so there is no need for creating a new system. In my personal opinion, I do not think we need to take up the member's colleague's input, mainly because we already have these things under control, and there is no need to do that.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am reflecting on my friend's previous comments because there have been a number of concerns over the lack of public oversight for CSIS, and these concerns come from the authorities that deal with Canada's spy agency.

I am not sure if my Conservative colleague across the way is suggesting that the public oversight is sufficient right now. The experts who have been dealing with CSIS and some of the audits of that very program by those in charge of its oversight have noted gaps in oversight in general.

My question for the member is very specific. This large and complicated bill represented an opportunity to ensure and restore the public's faith in our spy agencies and to enhance it by having better public oversight. I have an analogy for him that might work out in this case.

After a number of incidents with the RCMP, a number of us had advocated for public oversight of that particular police force. There was a desire to have the public as the arbitrator of incidents in which there was violence or potential death involved in interactions with the RCMP.

There was resistance from the Conservatives at the time, to be fair, yet the public had moved to a place where that change was seen as a way to enhance our police system and to enhance public support for the police. If that was true and if it works with the RCMP and with the various provincial police forces, why would it not also be true for our national spy agency? Why would we not enhance public oversight, which is not properly done in this legislation?

Mr. Joe Daniel: Mr. Speaker, the best definition I have for an expert is a drip under pressure. I would be very interested to find out who these experts are that my colleague is talking about who are asking about these things.

Clearly, this bill is in place to protect Canadians and Canada for the future and for the long term. It is a fine bill that needs to be put through as soon as possible.

●(1135)

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to speak to very timely and important legislation. The protection of Canada from terrorists act is a critical bill that would enable us to do what is fundamental for any government to do, and that is to protect its nation and citizens. That is why we are taking part in the coalition that is currently conducting air strikes against ISIL and supporting the security forces in Iraq in their fight against the terrorist scourge of ISIL.

However, not all terrorism occurs abroad. Indeed, the global terror threat hits close to home, especially for members of Parliament and those in Ottawa, as well as our Canadian Forces members in Quebec. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of Patrice Vincent and Nathan Cirillo. The families and friends of these Canadian heroes know painfully well that we face the very real threat of terror here at home.

As the Minister of Public Safety has stated, we will not overreact in response to recent terrorist attacks, but it is also important that we not under react to threats against us. We know we are not overreacting when just this past week a leader of ISIL called for "volcanoes of jihad" against Canada and our allies. We are taking these threats seriously and have joined our allies in actions that are degrading ISIL's capabilities.

As the Prime Minister stated last Friday, our military fight is with ISIL. Because of the real and present danger of ISIL, we have brought forward balanced and clear measures that would strengthen the tools available to the law enforcement community in areas of surveillance, detention and arrest.

The protection of Canada from terrorists act is the first reasonable step in our efforts to do that. We are working diligently to strengthen tools available to the law enforcement community.

Why is this necessary? Recent court decisions called into question the role of our law enforcement agencies and invited the government to respond. As reasonable and transparent legislators, we brought forward legislation that would clarify the roles and activities of our law enforcement agencies that track and monitor terrorists abroad. While opposition members will argue that it is not necessary, or complain that we are overreacting or overreaching, we know there is nothing more risky than losing track of terrorist threats. Once they are in the wind, or even back in Canada, we are at a greater risk.

Canadians can know this about our government. When law enforcement agencies require additional tools to keep Canadians safe from terror threats, we on this side of the House will respond. We will give them the tools they need. We will not apologize for it and we will not support doing nothing. We will not defend inaction with fancy language about privacy and claims that we should protect the privacy concerns of terrorists over the safety of our Canadian citizens.

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Safety and privacy are not competing interests. Canadians know this. Without security, we would not have the privilege of privacy. Our government has confidence in our national security agencies. The men and women of our national security agencies are working overtime, and around the clock, to keep Canadians safe.

It is not only our security agencies that are protecting us here and abroad. On November 11, we commemorated the sacrifices of the many Canadian heroes who have fought to keep us safe for the freedoms we hold dear.

We live in a dangerous world. We are not immune to the threats that our allies face. For this reason, we continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies against the very real threat that ISIL poses. I am proud of the Canadian Forces for their concerted efforts to degrade ISIL and maintain the security of Canadians. I am thankful they are working diligently to eliminate these threats so Canadians at home and abroad are safe.

Our government remains focused on ensuring the safety and security of Canadians. The crucial role that our security and intelligence service plays in keeping Canadians safe cannot be overstated. We will continue to equip the brave men and women, who put their lives on the line to protect Canadians, with the tools they need to address terrorism in an increasingly dangerous global environment.

Another key piece of the protection of Canada from terrorists act is early implementation of the revocation of citizenship provision from those who are convicted of terrorism, spying or treason, found in the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act. We passed this legislation, which will strip the Canadian Citizenship from dual nationals who engage in acts of terrorism or fight against the Canadian Armed Forces, in order to protect Canadians. The Liberals and the NDP voted against the bill, and that is a shame.

• (1140)

We then passed the Combating Terrorism Act and introduced Canada's first counterterrorism strategy, a four-pronged approach to prevent, detect, deny resources and respond to terrorist activity and threats. This legislation has already led to criminal convictions. Again, the NDP opposed these common sense measures.

The new provisions in Bill C-44 would enable the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to revoke Canadian citizenship from dual citizens who are convicted of terrorism, high treason and treason or spying offences. This action would reinforce the high values of citizenship to ensure that dual citizens who had been convicted of terrorist acts would not continue to benefit from Canadian citizenship.

These measures demonstrate our Conservative government's continued commitment to do what is necessary, within the law, to prevent terrorists and violent extremists from carrying out vicious attacks against Canadians.

Bill C-44 is important because it is legislation that would provide the necessary tools for law enforcement to do the job it does now. a job it needs to do.

I cannot imagine being asked to come to Ottawa as a member of Parliament and not being afforded the tools to do that job effectively.

My constituents would not be well-served if I were not given the tools to do the job.

In the same way, we know Canadians will be safer and more secure if law enforcement is able to do an effective job, and not just any job, the job of tracking terrorist threats, ensuring that witnesses are safe and ensuring that threats to Canada are not allowed free rein to strike fear in our communities.

As we continue to debate the legislation, I hope all members of the House will carefully consider this important legislation and will join me in supporting our law enforcement agencies and pass the protection of Canada from terrorists act.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague's comments. As a former peace officer, I know he swore an oath which transcends his time as a peace officer to his time now, as an MP in the House, to uphold the rule of law. Therefore, I want to ask him a couple of questions about the rule of law and a couple of questions around what we heard from expert testimony from CSIS and the RCMP itself.

The deputy commissioner of CSIS came to committee and said that there was a large resource question problem, and that is the financing, the capacity to do the job that CSIS is being asked to do is compromised.

The experts from CSIS and the RCMP combined also testified that although the government brought in the Combating Terrorism Act in 2013, which amended the Criminal Code, 80 Canadians had gone abroad and had participated in terrorist activities on foreign soil, and not a single Canadian of those 80 had been prosecuted.

When the member talks about upholding the rule of law, when he talks about ensuring we come to Ottawa to give our security forces and agencies the powers and the resources they need, why is the government fixated on getting additional powers when the front-line practitioners in our intelligence services and agencies are telling us it is not so much power as it is money and resources to do the job?

Mr. Rob Clarke: Mr Speaker, one thing I want to point out for my colleague is that since 2006, we have increased the budget of the RCMP and CSIS by one-third.

I also want to make one thing very clear. As a former member of the RCMP, I did take an oath. The oath was to keep the peace and protect Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Going back to my RCMP days, there was an unfortunate incident in which three of my members were shot, two passed away. I remember that to this day.

The legislation before us, which would protect Canadians and give CSIS the additional powers in the toolbox that it needs to do its job, makes sense. A loss of any Canadian in Canada due to a terrorist extremist threat cannot be underestimated. They are there. It does not matter where they are. They could be next door to my colleague. We do not know. That is why we have to give the powers to CSIS.

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•(1145)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question is not directly related to this bill, but it still pertains to public safety.

Following the events that occurred in October, we all agreed to review how our security system works and look at how we can address radicalization in Canada. That is extremely important.

I am pleased to see that Bill C-44 has been introduced and to be able to examine it in committee. However, I do not think that providing tools is the only solution in this case.

The Conservative government has made over \$690 million in cuts to public safety since 2012. The Canada Border Services Agency and other organizations lost front-line jobs. The RCMP had to deal with drastic cuts and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service experienced cuts as well. These front-line workers who exchanged information with our international allies lost their jobs. It is therefore extremely difficult to act under such circumstances.

It is all well and good to give tools to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. However, could my colleague tell me whether the Conservative government also intends to give our law enforcement agencies the resources they need to properly enforce the law?

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Clarke: Mr. Speaker, my colleague indicated that there were no problems with the bill. Then why not support it? You stood up in the House and said that there were no problems with the legislation. Then you turned around and said—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. I would ask the member to direct his comments to the Chair rather than directly to his colleague.

Mr. Rob Clarke: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I am very passionate about the RCMP. I come from that background and I take offence when I hear about cost reductions.

It is ironic that my colleague mentioned underfunding. Our government has increased funding by one-third, and that is about \$700 million more than when the Liberals were in power. We are looking at and studying the backroom. There is a high level of officers in the higher ranks of the RCMP. We are trying to get grassroots police officers and investigators on the streets. We are trying to give Canadians, from coast to coast to coast, the protection they deserve.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that I will share my time with my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. As a gentleman, I would normally say that I am pleased to share my time with the member, but this morning I am holding back a bit. It is not because I do not want to hear from the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, but this morning, for the 81st time in this 41st Parliament, the members of the House are being forced to share their time if they want a chance—and not everyone will have a chance—to share a comment, thought or opinion about a

bill as important as the one we are currently studying, Bill C-44. This is a serious breach of our democratic rules.

Time allocation motions should be used in exceptional circumstances, but they have become the norm here. I wanted to take a few moments to protest this, knowing full well that this would cut into my time to speak to the substance of Bill C-44, but also that I have far too little time to really cover the issue. Even if we were to add up all of the speeches made by my colleagues in the House, we would never manage to fully address the issue, in light of this government's narrow-mindedness.

First of all, I will say that I will vote in favour of this bill at second reading. There are enough elements in this bill that are worthy of consideration and discussion in the committee that handles these issues. This committee has the necessary expertise and will, I hope, hear from relevant witnesses who are much more qualified than yours truly, and who can perhaps bring a different perspective than my own, which is to reflect the vision of my riding—the mandate that we all have as members of Parliament.

Nevertheless, I do want to point out that I have some concerns, as big as this House, that the committee could also end up under a gag order, as have many others. We do not even have any assurance that the debates will be public; however, if there is one topic that it of interest to the general public, it is public safety and civil liberties in this country.

It is quite ironic to have this 81st time allocation motion on a bill as fundamental as this one.

Furthermore, we must be able to make some amendments in order to highlight the fact that what we are looking for in the bill, which I do not think is present at this time, is not some sort of balance or acceptable compromise between public safety, or what we need to put in place to guarantee it, and civil liberties. Our thinking is not focused on compromise. Rather, our thinking is more about seeing how we can do more to defend and protect the rights of all Canadians, as well as to ensure their safety, since it is the government's duty to do so.

Furthermore, the tragic events that occurred right here and in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu sharply frame the debate on public safety and civil liberties. However, as tragic as those events were, they should not be an excuse to rush the discussion that we need to have on how to respond to them. Haste is rarely a wise adviser in these matters.

In these matters, as in many other areas, the devil is often in the details, and we have a duty to make sure that the measures we want to put in place are relevant and effective. The repercussions that our decisions will have on the public safety and civil liberties of Canadians are far too important for us to rush this kind of bill through. Is it not true that enlightenment comes when ideas collide? For heaven's sake, let us take the time we need to look into, understand and analyze every aspect of this bill in light of the expertise shared by the many competent stakeholders in the field.

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•(1150)

For the benefit of those who watch our debates and are concerned about the very nature of Bill C-44, I will provide a summary of the measures it includes. This bill was described to us this morning as being relatively simple because it has only four pages, as though the number of pages had anything to do with the complexity of the issues we have to debate.

The first element of Bill C-44 provides a legal framework to the intelligence operations conducted by CSIS abroad. As such, CSIS' activities will no longer be limited by national concerns. Second, under this bill, the Federal Court could henceforth provide CSIS with warrants that have effect outside Canada.

Third, Bill C-44 guarantees the protection of human sources who provide intelligence to CSIS in the context of legal proceedings. Finally, the fourth element speeds up the process for revoking the citizenship of those individuals who have dual citizenship and whose activities are linked to terrorism or any other serious offence. That is probably the element that bothers me the most because I wonder how it is relevant to this bill.

I have a funny feeling that the Conservative government has managed to recreate in this four-page bill, its legendary approach, namely to introduce omnibus bills that combine as many issues as possible. I think the issue of citizenship should be dealt with differently. Will this mean that the status of a Canadian citizen by birth will be different from that of a person who became a Canadian citizen through immigration?

I spent years trying to make my students understand that there is just one Canadian citizenship status. Today, the government is opening the door to a shift in perspective that would now distinguish between Canadians from here and those who came from elsewhere. It is hard to create a perfectly cohesive society or one that strives for cohesion, with comments like that. This simple clause makes me shudder and deserves in-depth discussions backed by expertise and not ideology.

Mr. Speaker, you are already motioning that my time is drawing to an end. I will therefore comply with your instructions as the timekeeper and moderator of our debates, but I think that you are once again proving that we do not have enough time in the House to clearly express our ideas. Therefore, I will skip several pages and get to my conclusion and some things that I believe to be of even greater importance.

A broad coalition of stakeholders support our position, which is that both the powers of CSIS and civilian oversight should be enhanced. The two must go hand in hand. I would not say that they must work in parallel, because then they would not talk to one another, which is an all too frequent problem. For example, both the Privacy Commissioner and the Information Commissioner recognized that security and civil liberties requirements are inextricably linked.

Mr. Speaker, as long as I can see the fingers on your hand indicating that I have some time left, I have hope. As they are disappearing at a furious rate, I will summarize my initial position with the following comments.

I said initial position on purpose because it will change as a result of meetings and discussions. I hope that we will all be open-minded so that we can find the best idea and not try to prove that our idea is the best, which unfortunately is all too often the case in Parliament. I hope that in the end, Bill C-44 will truly be Parliament's bill and not just the government's bill.

•(1155)

[*English*]

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of my colleague's speech, he referenced the fact that, once again, we are debating this particular bill under time allocation. An Inter-Parliamentary Union document put out celebrating the International Day of Democracy says:

The test of courage comes when we are in the minority. The test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority.

It goes on to say that political tolerance implies freedom of expression, open dialogue and a diversity of views. It also indicates that the rights of the opposition include:

[The] Right to contribute to the legislative process, such as the right to submit bills and amendments, and to put questions to members of government.

I wonder if the member could comment on how important this bill is and that we as parliamentarians representing Canadians from coast to coast to coast have the right to speak in the House of Commons to this very important matter.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

Of course that is a fundamental right, and I am having a hard time understanding. The next election is just around the corner, and I hope that a majority of Canadians will understand and recognize the skills and experience of the member for Outremont, who would be the best prime minister. I find it hard to imagine how, under Conservative ideology, we would bring in 30 new MPs, congratulate them on being elected and tell them that they are now the proud representatives of the people who elected them and that now they should sit down and shut up.

That is exactly what is going on in this Parliament. When they use closure for the 81st time and when they make committees sit behind closed doors and refuse to televise the meetings, what are they telling the people's representatives in the House if not to shut up? This is a clear perversion of democracy that we have to fight with all our strength. I hope people will hear this message. Maybe Bill C-44 will be the first bill to earn unanimous consent because it is off to a good start now that there is consensus at second reading to send it to committee.

Why not ensure that at the end of the day, Parliament will unanimously pass this bill? It might take a bit longer, but it will send a message to Canadians that their democracy is working.

•(1200)

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for my colleague. It is essentially the same question I asked the government.

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We heard expert testimony from the heads of SIRC and the RCMP. In committee, they explained that this was not about getting additional powers. They are not asking for these so-called additional powers. They need resources to implement and oversee the existing measures in the Criminal Code of Canada, for example.

I have a question for my colleague. He will recall that since the government came to power, it has spent more than \$600 million to advertise its economic action plan. Meanwhile, our security and intelligence agencies are telling parliamentarians in committee that they need additional resources to do their jobs.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and for the context.

If I had more time, I would go into all of this government's expenses that I would call inappropriate. Governing a country involves making choices. For a government, as with personal finances, the main obstacle to pursuing dreams and plans is the availability of funds. Good managers are those who are capable of making good choices.

When it comes to public safety and civil liberties, many things are already possible under the existing legal framework. However, it is difficult to do anything if the resources are not there. As my father would always say, if you do not walk the talk, nothing will get done.

A study needs to be done about the funding that is available so that the agencies already on the ground can do their job effectively before they are given new tools, which will probably not be properly funded either.

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-44, an act to amend the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and other acts. It is important to note that, unfortunately, the government just limited the time we will have in the House to discuss this huge bill that will have a rather serious impact on Canada's oversight bodies. The government decided to gag the House. The House adopted a government motion to limit the time for debate on Bill C-44. It is very disappointing. That move limits parliamentarians' ability to do their job in the House and properly debate Bill C-44, a huge bill that proposes some fairly significant changes to CSIS.

I hope that this bill will be examined in depth in committee. That is very important since fairly major amendments need to be made to this bill. Basically, the bill increases the authority of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service or CSIS and makes three significant changes. First, the bill clarifies the legal authority of CSIS to conduct security intelligence operations abroad in response to threats to the security of Canada. Second, it confirms the jurisdiction of the Federal Court to issue warrants that have effect outside Canada. Third, it protects the identity of CSIS human intelligence sources in judicial proceedings.

It is also important to mention that Bill C-44 amends the Citizenship Act by fast-tracking the revocation of Canadian citizenship in the case of dual citizens who are linked to terrorist activities and other serious offences.

There are three very important elements to underscore in this debate. Any legislative measure passed by the House aimed at dealing with threats to the security of Canada must reflect three

principles. It must provide for greater civilian oversight, the protection of civil liberties and appropriate resources. Any bill passed by this government must take those three criteria into account. First of all, greater civilian oversight is crucial if we want to give CSIS new powers. Many stakeholders have expressed concerns about this. As we know, the Security Intelligence Review Committee does not have the necessary powers for proper oversight of CSIS. In addition, as they have been known to do, the Conservatives used an omnibus bill, the 2012 budget bill, to eliminate the position of inspector general of CSIS.

The fact that CSIS lacks civilian oversight was raised at the time of the Maher Arar affair. In 2006, the commission of inquiry on the Maher Arar case made some recommendations. One of the recommendations called for new accountability measures for Canada's intelligence agencies. Eight years have passed since Justice O'Connor made those recommendations. The government still has not implemented them.

• (1205)

Although the Conservative government introduced this bill, which makes huge changes to the powers of CSIS, it did not do its homework. It did not consult the experts or take seriously the recommendations of the Arar commission, which date back to 2006.

It is not just this commission that called for more civilian oversight. The Privacy Commissioner of Canada and the Commissioner of the Environment, two officers of Parliament, called on the federal government to ensure that effective oversight was included in any legislative measure that would grant new powers to CSIS and law enforcement agencies. Unfortunately, we see nothing in Bill C-44 in response to this call for increased civilian oversight of CSIS.

It is crucial and non-negotiable that greater oversight go along with any new powers granted to CSIS. As several of my colleagues mentioned, the oversight is inadequate.

The Security Intelligence Review Committee is the oversight body for CSIS. For the Canadians who are watching, the members of this committee work part time, are unelected and are appointed by the Prime Minister. Two of the five seats on this committee have been vacant for months, and it seems that the Conservatives are dragging their feet on filling these positions.

In addition, SIRC merely has an interim chair, Deborah Grey, who used to be a Reform MP. This committee does not have enough members; only three of the five seats are currently filled. That is inadequate for oversight of CSIS.

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In the 2012 budget—another omnibus budget with dozens of pages—the Conservatives eliminated the position of inspector general of CSIS. The inspector general was in charge of internal oversight, ensuring that the service's activities complied with the law. We can all agree that it is a very important role. Since 2012, however, the inspector general's responsibilities have been transferred to SIRC, the committee I just spoke about that functions on a part-time basis and is lacking resources.

I would like to quickly speak about the two other principles that I mentioned. As I said, three principles must be taken into consideration each time we study a bill concerning Canada's security.

I already spoke about greater oversight, but we also need to protect our civil liberties. When I spoke to my constituents in Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, they repeatedly said that we need to ensure that Canadians are safe, but at the same time, we need to protect civil liberties. That is crucial because protecting civil liberties and ensuring public safety are both fundamental Canadian values that are non-negotiable. We want legislation that strengthens our civil liberties, and this bill does not clearly do that.

What is more, every measure or bill that is designed to improve security must be coupled with the appropriate resources.

•(1210)

The government can give CSIS more power, but if the organization does not have the resources needed to get the job done, we are no safer. The Conservatives have cut funding to our public safety organizations for three consecutive years, for a total of \$687.9 million in cuts by 2015. That concerns me. This bill must be coupled with the necessary financial resources.

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for that speech.

I want to speak just a moment about the CSIS Act. It was first passed into legislation back in 1984, which was 30 years ago. The things CSIS has been doing, obviously, operating overseas, tracking terrorism, protecting its human sources, are all things that have recently been called into question by court decisions.

The purpose of the legislation before us is to bring further clarity to the act to ensure that CSIS could continue operating as it has always done. I wonder why the member assumes that is not the case.

The legislation is very clear and to the point. It hits a number of issues regarding protecting human sources and the ability of CSIS to operate overseas. I wonder why the member thinks CSIS should not be able to continue operating as it always has been.

•(1215)

[Translation]

Ms. Laurin Liu: Mr. Speaker, I get the feeling that the member opposite did not really listen to my speech.

I am proud to say that I will vote in favour of the bill at second reading because it should go to committee. Committee members should also study the opposition parties' proposals, including the

NDP's. I will vote in favour of this bill because it contains important measures.

However, there are many flaws in the bill. The Conservative government made a mess of this because the bill does not provide for increased civilian oversight, which the 2006 commission of inquiry into the Maher Arar case recommended. The Conservative government needs to do its homework.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment further on something I mentioned a few minutes ago. This bill does not address concerns about national security related to the events in Quebec City and Ottawa earlier this month. That is for sure.

First, can my colleague tell us what she thinks of that? The government needs to explain why existing legislation, particularly the Criminal Code, was not used against individuals who pose a threat to our country. We heard about how 80 Canadians were involved in terrorist activities abroad. Even so, not a single Canadian has been charged in relation to that.

Second, can my colleague help us understand why the bill authorizes judges to issue warrants to CSIS regardless of any other laws in effect, specifically laws in foreign countries? That is an absolutely enormous power.

Can she tell us what she thinks of these two troubling measures?

Ms. Laurin Liu: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments.

However, I hesitate to make the same connection he did between this bill and the events that occurred in Parliament on October 22. We know that it takes the government months to prepare its bills and that this bill was in progress well before those events occurred.

Despite what happened a few weeks ago, we still need to take a sensible approach that protects our civil liberties. That is what is missing from this bill.

I did not really have time in my speech to talk about the fact that CSIS lacks resources, so I would simply like to quote Jeff Yaworski, who appeared before a Senate committee on Monday, October 20. He is the assistant director of operations at CSIS. Mr. Yaworski indicated that CSIS does not have the resources needed to do its job. In fact, we know that \$24.5 million in cuts have been made to the agency.

It is therefore all well and good to give CSIS more powers, but the Conservative government is refusing to give CSIS the resources it needs to do its job properly. That is very disappointing.

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member from Don Valley West.

I am honoured to be here today to speak in support of the protection of Canada from terrorists act.

Government Orders

We all know that the work we are doing here is extremely important. There has been much discussion about balancing the tools the security agencies need with broader privacy concerns. I completely agree with that position. We must not overreact to horrific attacks, such as those that occurred on October 20 and October 22, but it is also time that we as Canadians stop under-reacting to the very real threat of terrorism.

The bill before us today strikes an appropriate balance. All the measures put forward in this bill are common-sense tools that would enable the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, otherwise known as CSIS, to continue keeping us safe without infringing on any of the freedoms that make this country great. To highlight this fact, I would like to discuss the three core elements of the proposal before us.

First, this bill makes minor adjustments to the CSIS Act to provide anonymity for CSIS human sources. It would confirm CSIS's mandate to investigate threats to Canada both at home and abroad and would provide anonymity to CSIS employees who may engage in covert activities.

Protecting the identity of human sources clarifies what has been an operational assumption for many years. Earlier this year the courts ruled that because this power was not legislated within the act, CSIS sources did not have that anonymity. This was a surprise to our national security agencies, and to probably many of us in the House, given that police informants have this type of protection. It is common sense that an informant for CSIS should be afforded the same protections under the law as an informant for the RCMP. This amendment would be invaluable for the brave men and women at CSIS in their work keeping all Canadians safe. We know that human sources are instrumental in CSIS's intelligence-gathering activities. Protecting their identity in court would facilitate prosecutions, future operations, and the recruitment of sources.

To illustrate the necessity of this measure, let us discuss a hypothetical example. Let us say that an individual becomes aware of a radicalized person or people within their social circle who the individual believes may be planning a terrorist attack on Canadians. Let us say that this person does the right thing and informs authorities about these individuals. Then suppose CSIS establishes a relationship with this person, who agrees to become a human source for the service to protect Canada and our citizens. Again, for the sake of this argument, let us assume that this source begins informing on not just one but on 10 suspected terrorists, if there are more players involved. Let us imagine that one of these 10 targets tells this source that he or she plans to commit an act of terror in the immediate future. In a world where CSIS can protect its source's identity, the next step in this case becomes very simple. CSIS would inform the RCMP of the imminent threat, and the RCMP would leverage the human source's information, along with other available evidence, to lay charges against the terrorist or suspected terrorist. The human source would then continue to gather evidence on the other nine individuals.

Now let us consider the decision-making process if CSIS cannot protect the identity of that human source. First, disclosing the source's identity in court would put that person at risk of retribution from the associates related to that one individual. Second, CSIS would lose the source's future value against the other nine individuals under investigation.

Our intelligence authorities cannot control the rate at which investigations proceed. It may very well be the case that the threat posed by the group of nine individuals is greater than the immediate threat posed by the lone wolf. However, if they do not have enough information to prosecute all 10, the service must make a choice: leverage a human source's information to arrest one individual who may pose an immediate threat, or wait and continue investigating a potentially larger and greater threat to Canada.

I do not think CSIS should be asked to make that choice, and I do not think Canadians across this country would expect it to. That is why I support this common-sense reform. Furthermore, I do not believe that this infringes on privacy rights or the right to a fair trial, as a judge may force the crown to disclose a source's identity if this is crucial to proving the innocence of the accused.

The other issues in this bill are, I would argue, also easy decisions. There are several proposed amendments that confirm CSIS's ability to operate abroad. This merely provides clarity in law to support CSIS's presence abroad. This is both timely and appropriate, as we know that there are individuals outside of Canada's borders who seek to do us harm here in Canada.

● (1220)

The terrorist threat knows no borders. We should not make our security agencies fight this threat with one hand tied behind their backs, let alone two. I am supportive of allowing CSIS to pursue warrants against Canadians abroad. This measure is particularly timely given that we know that approximately 145 Canadians have travelled abroad for terrorist purposes. CSIS should have the ability to seek warrants against these individuals and to monitor them, regardless of where their location might be. This is an important operational tool that we can provide to CSIS without hindering an individual's privacy, as CSIS will still require a warrant from a judge to use intrusive investigative techniques. I just want to reinforce that: CSIS would need a warrant from a judge.

Finally, this bill would provide anonymity to all CSIS employees who may become engaged in covert activities. Currently only CSIS employees who are engaged in covert activities are afforded anonymity before the courts. CSIS analysts and trainees are not protected and could have their identities disclosed in open court. One can imagine that this would jeopardize its employees' utility in future operations.

Providing anonymity to employees of an intelligence agency makes all the sense in the world. I do not believe for a single minute that this measure would impact the privacy rights of Canadians.

All the measures proposed in this legislation would enhance CSIS's ability to do its job effectively and efficiently. These are key to enabling CSIS to protect Canadians from those who seek to do us harm, whether it is here in Canada or abroad.

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I am proud that our Conservative government has brought forward common-sense reforms while respecting the rights and freedoms that make this country so great. I encourage all members of the House to support this common-sense legislation.

• (1225)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the parliamentary secretary's speech on this legislation.

We on this side of the House have said that we support the bill in principle, but we have concerns about the details in the bill, in particular its granting of additional powers to CSIS without strengthening accountability measures.

My question for the parliamentary secretary goes along with the question I asked the minister earlier. Since we are under time allocation, and the minister has said that the committee is the proper place to deal with our concerns, will the parliamentary secretary commit now to allowing the committee to have a full range of witnesses appear and a full debate of possible amendments to the bill?

Ms. Roxanne James: Mr. Speaker, the minister answered that question clearly in the House earlier today. Committee business is done in committee. This is certainly not the public safety committee. That will be a decision made by members of that committee.

It is interesting to note that the NDP member opposite indicated that his party will be supporting this legislation going to committee. As in the past, that is the pattern of what the NDP does. Those members support sending bills to committee, and then when the bills come back, they vote against them.

This is a common-sense bill. It would not give CSIS any more powers than any other law enforcement agency across this country has. It would ensure that CSIS has the ability to continue to operate abroad, to track terrorists to keep Canadians safe, and to ensure that its human sources, or informants, have protection under the law, as do other law enforcement informants.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary may describe this as a common-sense bill, but what the government has missed here is a common-sense opportunity to improve the overall situation in Canada with respect to our intelligence and security agencies.

First, the government still has not explained why it refuses to join its partners under the Five Eyes structure. That is, why is it not joining the U.S., Britain, Australia, and New Zealand in ensuring that there is a parliamentary committee of all parties, parliamentarians together, to oversee the important work of CSIS? That is an outstanding question. The government has an opportunity to improve the situation, but it seems to be refusing to.

Second, we heard from CSIS at committee that the biggest problem it is facing right now is resources, not additional legal powers. It did not come to committee saying that it needs these precise powers. It is true we have had a series of judicial rulings, but CSIS said it needs resources.

We need to remind Canadians of two things. While the government says it has increased the budget for CSIS and the RCMP, it is not telling Canadians that it spent over \$600 million in

advertising and over \$600 million in outside legal fees, this despite the fact that Justice Canada has 2,500 lawyers on staff.

Could the parliamentary secretary help us understand why the government is not meeting the real needs of our intelligence and security agencies on the resourcing side while speaking constantly about the need to give new powers to these agencies?

• (1230)

Ms. Roxanne James: Mr. Speaker, first of all, this government is doing what the previous Liberal Party, when in office, could not do. We have increased the budgets and funding for both the RCMP and CSIS. In fact, since the Conservatives came to office, we have increased funding for the RCMP by \$700 million and CSIS by \$200 million. This is above and beyond what the Liberals did in the last year they were in office.

When the member talked about our partners in the Five Eyes, he listed several countries. First of all, Canada is not one of the other countries. This is Canada. I wish that member, when comparing us with other countries such as our partners, New Zealand, Australia, Britain, and the United States, had considered the same argument when he stood in the House and voted against standing shoulder-to-shoulder in our fight against global terrorism.

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in this place and offer my support for Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act. Over the past few months, Canadians have been rightly outraged by the atrocities committed by ISIL. Its barbarism cannot and should not be ignored. To do so would be to leave a ticking bomb with a lit fuse, one that stretches from Iraq to our shores.

We saw this on October 20 and October 22, when two Canadian Armed Forces soldiers were killed in cold blood. The terrorists responsible for these atrocities did so in a planned and calculated way in an attempt to intimidate Canadians into bowing to the terrorist caliphate known as the Islamic State. This is the very definition of terrorism. The President of France, the U.S. Secretary of State and most importantly, the Commissioner of the RCMP, have all confirmed this point.

We must at all costs degrade and destroy the threat posed by ISIL. That is why our government joined our allies to defuse the threat of ISIL at the source. However, military action is only one element of our response to terrorism. The other is gathering intelligence to confront the diverse array of threats to our security. That is easier said than done. The landscape for intelligence work is rapidly evolving and we need to ensure that our security and intelligence agencies have the tools they need to keep Canadians safe and secure.

The world of terrorism has changed dramatically since the 1980s. The CSIS Act, which today's legislation seeks to modernize, was originally written in the era of the Cold War and the rotary telephone. Violent extremism has taken new forms and the threats to Canadians are both more numerous and more sophisticated.

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The 2014 public report on the terrorist threat to Canada identified more than 130 individuals with Canadian connections who were abroad and suspected of supporting terror-related activities. As we heard recently from CSIS, this number includes some 50 individuals who are known to be working directly with ISIL and other extremist groups in the region. These extremist travellers pose a threat both to people in foreign countries and to the citizens of Canada. We must stop them from inflicting harm on others. That is exactly what we are doing with the legislation before us today.

We know that we must approach the threat of terrorism and extremist travellers from many angles. This means bringing into force on an earlier timeline the new citizenship revocation provisions that help protect the safety and security of Canadians and safeguard the strong values associated with Canadian citizenship.

That is the goal of the first part of the protection of Canada from terrorists act. We are proposing technical amendments to the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, which received royal assent on June 19, 2014. These amendments will allow for earlier implementation of provisions related to revocation of Canadian citizenship.

These provisions include expanded grounds for revocation of citizenship and a more streamlined decision-making process to allow the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to make revocation decisions depending on the grounds. Our government firmly believes that we must move quickly to implement provisions that permit the revocation of Canadian citizenship from those radicalized individuals who are convicted of an act of terrorism or who travel overseas to engage in armed conflict with Canada.

We will not hesitate to do what is necessary to protect our country and other innocent citizens of the world who may fall victim to acts of terrorism overseas. Revocation is an important tool to safeguard our strong Canadian values and the integrity of our citizenship program. While we have strengthened our citizenship laws, we know that there are already individuals who have left Canada to join extremist groups and that we must ensure that we can track and intercept those individuals before they commit acts of terrorism.

• (1235)

With the second part of this legislation, we will work to do just that. The proposed amendments to the CSIS Act will add another tool to our counter-terrorism toolbox.

CSIS is a highly professional organization that has succeeded in adapting its tactics and tools to keep up with the ever-changing environment. However, the time has come to amend its governing legislation, the CSIS Act. In doing so, we can ensure that CSIS is well positioned to take reasonable and necessary measures to investigate threats to the security of Canada, wherever they may occur. Reasonable people can agree that CSIS must have this ability. Threats to the security of Canada are more global and complex than they were when the CSIS Act came into force.

Allow me to highlight the major amendments proposed by this legislation. The first major amendment is to confirm CSIS' authority to conduct investigations outside of Canada related to threats to the security of Canada and security assessments. CSIS has always had the authority to undertake investigative activities outside of Canada.

However, this authority is not as clearly stated in the CSIS Act as it needs to be. It is important that Parliament provide clarity on this matter. This is a limited and focused amendment, one that merely confirms CSIS' existing authority and makes it even more explicit in law. We cannot afford to leave any gray areas with respect to the scope of CSIS' mandate.

Equally important, we need to clarify the jurisdiction of the Federal Court to issue warrants authorizing CSIS to undertake certain intrusive activities outside of Canada. To enable CSIS to properly investigate threats outside of Canada, the proposed amendments would clarify that the Federal Court need only consider the CSIS Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms when determining whether a warrant is required.

A third major amendment concerns the protection of sources. Common law has long afforded protections for the identity of police informants. Without such protection, witnesses may be reluctant to come forward and criminals may not be prosecuted. The stakes are just as high when it comes to threats to Canada's national security. Through the information of human sources, CSIS may be able to help thwart an attack on Canadians and Canadian interests. Obviously the ability to recruit human sources depends on their confidence that their identity will in fact be protected.

Some hon. members may be surprised to learn that the current CSIS Act does not explicitly protect the identity of intelligence sources during court proceedings. This bill would fill that gap. This protection will of course be consistent with Canadian values of the protection of individual rights and the rule of law. If the information is required in a criminal proceeding to demonstrate the innocence of the accused, the protection can be overturned.

The CSIS Act also has shortcomings that must be addressed with respect to protecting the identity of CSIS employees. Currently, it is an indictable offence to reveal the identity of a CSIS employee who is or has been involved in covert operations. However, the existing legislation does not protect those employees who are not yet but may be engaged in covert activity in the future. Another amendment addresses this oversight. In this way, CSIS employees who are training to become covert officers can be assured that their identity will be protected.

In summary, the amendments proposed today would allow for earlier implementation of citizenship revocation provisions, protect Canadians and other innocent citizens from the acts of violence carried out by extremist travellers, and give our intelligence service more effective tools and clearer authorities to fight violent extremism, including violence perpetrated by Canadians themselves.

Government Orders

I urge all hon. members to join me today in supporting the protection of Canada from terrorists act.

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier when I asked one of the Conservative members a question, Bill C-44 is an omnibus bill. In their speeches, members on the other side of the House are talking a lot about the fact that this bill affects the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, but that is not all that it does.

At the end of the bill, there is a provision regarding the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that has nothing to do with the rest of the bill. That provision moves up the coming into force date of a bill the Conservatives passed a few months ago that makes changes to the immigration system. It has nothing to do with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

Perhaps my colleague can provide a better answer to my question than his predecessor. I would like to know whether he is prepared to divide the bill in two in order to ensure that we are talking only about the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and that we are working on this issue, which is extremely important, particularly given the events that occurred in October. Canadians deserve to know what the government wants to do about this.

[*English*]

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, Canadians from coast to coast to coast will agree that we are in changing times. We are under threats from global terrorism and we must adapt with legislation and momentum that will give Canadians comfort that their security is seen as paramount by the House.

This bill would do just that. It would bring current the CSIS Act, which I spoke to at length, filling gaps where there need to be protections afforded to CSIS employees and their informants, et cetera, thereby giving our officers and security forces the comfort and the ability to do what is necessary to protect Canadians.

The member opposite brought up the question of the immigration act and the ongoing reformation of that act. Clearly, I believe that the parts of that act that are incorporated into this bill merely bring common-sense timing into place to ensure that the respective acts are aligned so that Canadians can have the comfort that, whether it is a citizenship issue covered under that act or the CSIS portion under that act, the provisions are aligned and would work together to the betterment of Canadian security.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member says that this bill would fill gaps. Let us talk about a few of those gaps.

The first gap is this. Why is the government not ensuring that Canada join its four partners under the Five Eyes structure to ensure that we have proper parliamentary oversight over CSIS? That is one question.

The second question is this. Given the legislation that is already on the books, for example, the Criminal Code and the amendments made to it by the government under the Combating Terrorism Act, the government has to explain why so many of these existing provisions of the Criminal Code have not been used in response to

those who represent a threat to this country, and explain whether it was actually informed of this problem by our security agencies.

Here is yet another gap. We know that as recently as October 15, the Conservative government failed to implement provisions of the 2011 border security agreement with the U.S. on information sharing with respect to the travel of potential terrorists. It is troubling to hear the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Prime Minister talk about new legislation and new powers when the government has not complied with the international agreements it has already signed, in this case on the international movement of those suspected of being associated with terrorist entities.

If we are to talk about filling gaps, can the government provide answers to those three simple questions?

• (1245)

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, I have heard the member opposite's questions asked several times today. Clearly, I thought they had been well answered on all counts.

Most importantly, Canada is a sovereign nation. We determine our own future. We have oversight that is adequate, professional, and committed to ensuring that CSIS meets its objectives. In that oversight, we should be more than comfortable as Canadians that our oversight body is getting the job done to ensure that CSIS meets its objectives.

As far as working with other countries is concerned, all countries work together as allies in some form or another, but this country will determine its own direction. It is only right that as Canadians we would want to see that maintained and that Canada maintains its control over its own security direction in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before we resume debate, I would like to let the chamber know that we have surpassed the five-hour limit for the debate on this motion since the first round of speeches on the question. Consequently, we are now at the spot where each of the following interventions will be limited to the 10-minute speech, and then the 5-minute period for questions and comments.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House of Commons to speak to this bill. As my colleagues before me have already indicated, the NDP plans to vote in favour of this bill.

However, I am very disappointed that we are debating this bill under a time allocation motion. This is the 81st time that a gag order has been imposed on debate on a bill, even though this is a very important bill that deals with security and gives CSIS greater powers. It is therefore very important that we have an extensive debate on this, but a time allocation motion was adopted this morning. This is very frustrating. I think this may even be a record, for I cannot remember any other government having imposed as many gag orders in such a short time.

Government Orders

The bill before us, Bill C-44, makes three important changes regarding CSIS. The first change is that it clarifies the legal authority of CSIS to conduct security intelligence operations abroad in response to threats to the security of Canada. It also confirms the jurisdiction of the Federal Court to issue warrants that have effect outside Canada, and it protects the identify of CSIS human intelligence sources in judicial proceedings.

I think it is very important to talk about a number of cases that were brought before the Supreme Court, where warrants were issued that did not expand CSIS' capacity to spy or conduct national security related activities in other countries. A number of Supreme Court and Federal Court rulings raised that matter.

The amendments being presented are quite interesting. However, it is important to note that we are effectively telling CSIS that it can increase its co-operation activities in the Five Eyes community. I am not sure what the French term is for Five Eyes. We usually use the English term. We are allowing CSIS to seek warrants for this purpose. This process was clarified to some extent to respond to the legal void raised by the Supreme Court.

We are in the process of increasing CSIS' powers, but this bill completely misses the boat on strengthening oversight of CSIS' operations. This bill could have included better protections and better oversight, such as civilian oversight. Many people made requests to that effect. As far as oversight is concerned, we currently have the Security Intelligence Review Committee. This committee only meets part time and is made up of un-elected individuals appointed by the Prime Minister. At this time, there is an acting chair. There is no official committee chair. What is more, two out of the five seats on the committee are vacant. In other words, we have a group of three, un-elected, appointed people who are assuring us that everything is fine. I think that Canadians expect better than that, and rightly so, because this is totally inadequate.

We hear all kinds of stories about abuses. We want to ensure that their operations are justified. Of course, much of what they do is secret. Clearly, we cannot give away national secrets or jeopardize national security. We are well aware of that, but there are ways to put legitimate oversight systems in place in order to ensure that there are no abuses and that all operations comply with Canadian law. There is absolutely nothing about that in the bill. For years, both the opposition and the community at large have been calling on the government to increase oversight of CSIS operations.

• (1250)

For example, during the Maher Arar inquiry, recommendations were made for improving accountability at CSIS. However, eight years later—that was in 2006—nothing has been done.

As well, the Privacy Commissioner recommended that each time a bill that increases CSIS's powers is introduced, oversight measures should automatically accompany it. If the government wants to increase powers, it must also improve the system, the accountability mechanism that ensures there are no abuses. That is very important, yet it is very much lacking.

It is also important to point out something else. The government eliminated the position of inspector general, who played an internal role, ensuring that the service's activities complied with the law.

Instead of increasing oversight—which is what should be happening—the government is decreasing it. That is very problematic.

I should point out that it is very important that our agencies have the tools they need to protect public safety. However, this is not a negotiation. We cannot completely ignore our civil liberties and rights just because more security is needed. That is not how it works. These aspects are very important, and we need to ensure they are protected. As parliamentarians, we have a duty to protect our country and to examine national security issues. However, we also have a duty to protect civil liberties and rights. That is why oversight is so important and why it should be a mandatory part of any proposal to increase powers. Even if we were not increasing CSIS's powers, civilian oversight would still be very important. This oversight certainly deserves more resources than three people sitting on a committee part time. It is very important.

We absolutely want the appropriate resources. However, the Conservatives have cut funding for our public safety agencies for three straight years, since 2011. By 2015, this will represent a total of \$687.9 million. As a result, CSIS will see \$24.5 million in cuts in 2015, while budget 2012 scrapped the CSIS inspector general position altogether, as I already mentioned. We are concerned that these cuts also impact the government's ability to exercise appropriate oversight over these agencies. The service is being asked to do more and more, but its budget is being cut. It is a little hard for this agency to implement an adequate oversight system.

I want to share what Daniel Therrien, the Privacy Commissioner, had to say. He said that it was understandable that the government would want to consider boosting the powers of law-enforcement and national security agencies to address potential gaps, but that any new tools should be accompanied by a beefed-up role for the watchdogs who keep an eye on spies and police.

That is what the commissioner said, and that is what we are asking for today. It is all well and good to increase powers, but we also need to increase oversight, because we need to ensure that civil liberties and rights are not violated. As I mentioned, we cannot sacrifice one for the other. It is a two-for-one special, if you will. The protection of civil liberties and rights goes hand in hand with national security. They are both possible if there is meaningful, enhanced oversight.

• (1255)

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking my colleague from Terrebonne—Blainville for her excellent speech. I know that she does really important work on digital issues and she is particularly concerned about Canadians' privacy, as she mentioned in her speech.

Government Orders

In this debate, there is a very fine line between civil liberties and public safety. However, as my colleague mentioned, they go hand in hand. Does my colleague believe that it is important for the Privacy Commissioner to appear before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, where we will be discussing the bill, to tell us what he thinks of it? Does she believe that we should closely examine certain elements of the bill and perhaps add others to ensure that we have excellent or at least better civilian oversight of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service?

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. I would also like to congratulate the member on her excellent work as our deputy public safety critic.

I agree that we should invite all of the experts on protecting our rights and freedoms. We cannot be ministers or critics of everything. We cannot know everything. We have to rely on experts. We in Canada are very lucky to have amazing experts and world-renowned academics, so we have to invite them, have a genuine consultation with them and ask them good questions.

Given the quote I read from the Privacy Commissioner, I am sure that the experts will recommend increasing civilian oversight and implementing measures to ensure that the police and spies, among others, obey the law. I know that some things have to be done in secret, but that does not mean we should violate people's freedoms or privacy.

Therefore, let us invite the experts. I hope that all committee members will do their best to ensure that all of the experts come to the table, including the Privacy Commissioner, who has an important part to play in this debate.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice of support for Bill C-44. This is an important piece of legislation that would give more powers to policing agencies in Canada to protect Canadians from terrorists.

I keep hearing from the opposition about the need to protect civil liberties, especially from a privacy standpoint, and we want to do that. We want to find the right balance. However, what it is proposing is that it should trump protecting Canadians from terrorists. We have to make sure, first and foremost, that we identify risks to the Canadian public and ensure that Canadians are not harmed.

I am wondering if she actually believes that terrorists deserve to have the same rights as law-abiding citizens.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Mr. Speaker, the member's lead-up had very little to do with his question. I would like to talk about something that my colleagues have not talked about today.

We are not asking for one to be more important than the other. This is not about choosing between national security and our rights and freedoms. No. We want both, and the two can coexist. That is already the case in some countries, which already have enhanced oversight in place.

We can do it. We do not have to choose one or the other. We can choose both. If the government cannot understand that, it is a good thing we are going to study the bill in committee.

• (1300)

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and privilege to rise today to add my voice to the debate on the protection of Canada from terrorists act.

As members know, the bill was not tabled in haste, and it has not been tabled as a stopgap measure in reaction to the terrible acts of violence our nation has witnessed in recent weeks. Indeed, as the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has made abundantly clear, this legislation was drafted and ready for tabling on the very day that a terrorist killed one of our Canadian Armed Forces members who was standing watch over the tomb of the unknown soldier, on the very day that this same terrorist ran down the hallways of this building before our brave law enforcement and House of Commons security forces brought him down. This bill was drafted with much thought and consideration in the light of the evolving terrorist threat facing all western democracies.

The two Canadian Armed Forces members who were murdered on October 20 and October 22 were the victims of individuals who had the same goals: to terrorize Canadians and frighten us into losing our resolve for doing that which is right and just.

Today we are debating Bill C-44, which would make amendments to the CSIS Act. These amendments include, among others, ensuring that CSIS has the tools it needs to investigate threats to the security of Canada outside of Canada, as well as creating a means to protect the identity of CSIS' human sources from disclosure. The bill would also make technical amendments to the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act to allow our government to seek earlier implementation of the citizenship revocation provisions, which received royal assent on June 19.

These amendments are critical to clarify the role of CSIS in light of recent court decisions that have addressed the important aspects of the mandate and investigative authorities of CSIS.

However, legislation is only part of the solution to countering terrorism and violent extremism.

A key part of our government's counterterrorism strategy involves building partnerships with Canadian communities over the long term. The focus of these partnerships is to develop resilience and foster critical thinking about extremist messaging and to help devise effective means to intervene during the radicalization to violence process.

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The troubling phenomenon of individuals travelling to commit terrorism is a fast-emerging component of radicalization to violence. As we have heard from CSIS and the RCMP recently, we know of a significant number of Canadians who have travelled to hot zones like Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria to join terrorist organizations, to undergo terrorist training and to conduct terrorist activity.

This is of grave concern for many reasons.

We are concerned because we care about young Canadians dying abroad. We are concerned because we want to prevent the damage that may cost human life and to societies struggling in the face of deep divisions. We are also concerned about what happens if these foreign fighters return home. Battle hardened and fully radicalized, they have tremendous potential as terrorist actors in Canada, and, even more important, real credibility as agents of radicalization in their own right.

However, we are tackling this issue in a number of ways.

One way is the revocation of citizenship of dual citizens who have, for example, served as members of an armed group engaged in conflict with Canada or have been convicted of terrorism.

Another way is to attack the movements and activities of those who have managed to leave the country in order to engage in activities that are a threat to the security of Canada. Again, this is part of the bill before us, which is to ensure the authority of CSIS is clear and is able to investigate threats outside of Canada.

Still another way is through initiatives like the Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security, CCRS, jointly led by Public Safety Canada and the Department of Justice. The CCRS is an excellent example of collaboration between the federal government and diverse communities across Canada. It brings together leading citizens from their respective communities, with extensive experience in social culture issues, to regularly engage with the government on long-term national security issues.

• (1305)

The CCRS meets three times a year to cover a wide scope of issues under the national security umbrella: resiliency, cybersecurity and airport security, among many others.

Over the past several years, the CCRS has focused much of its attention on the topic of countering violent extremism. It has been key in providing guidance and shaping how we talk to Canadians about this issue.

Through this forum, we look to our leaders and communities to help us better understand how to build trust with diverse communities, identifying the tools that communities need, and identifying contributing factors and intervention programs for persons who may be at risk to radicalization to violence.

CCRS members have also helped bridges into communities. Most recent, Public Safety undertook dedicated dialogues with communities on the topic of radicalization leading to violence. Communities are often the first to see suspicious signs or behaviours by others if they are planning something such as travel, attack planning, radicalization and recruiting others. We value the input we receive through these regular meetings.

Countering violent extremism is a defining challenge of our times, a challenge facing Canada and all nations that believe in the rule of law and the rights of our citizens to live in a safe and secure society.

As members can see, our government has been actively pursuing a robust strategy to counterterrorism activity and violent extremism well before the recent attacks on the Canadian Forces members last month.

We have been open in discussing that threat with the citizens of Canada through our counterterrorism strategy released in 2012 and two subsequent public reports on the terrorist threat to Canada which were released in 2013 and 2014.

Today, I have shared just a vew of the measures we are taking that speak to the “prevent, detect and deny” pillars of our strategy. This includes fostering trust and encouraging collaboration between government and communities. It includes preserving the integrity of Canadian citizenship by allowing certain provisions found within the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act to come into force earlier than planned. It also includes getting our society and intelligence agencies the tools they need to protect the safety and security of Canadians.

We must move ahead with these amendments with purpose and without delay.

I ask all members to join us in supporting the legislation. I ask all members to join us in protecting Canadians.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech with great interest.

The history of national security in Canada is one of long debate and a lot of study. However, it seems as though the bill is not only being rushed through the House but, from the minister's statements this morning, it will also be rushed through committee, with as few as eight witnesses called to discuss the act.

We are talking about significant increases in the power of CSIS to not only protect Canada, but also to possibly intrude in lives of Canadians.

Does my colleague think that eight witnesses are enough or does he think we should perhaps show more diligence in the review of this act?

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, the events we have seen around the world, especially when it concerns the radicalization of citizens within their own countries, and the evidence we have already received from the RCMP and CSIS before the public safety and national security committee just a few weeks ago, before the terrible events of October 20 and 21, shows us that we have had this conversation. We have talked about these issues and discussed them.

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If we listen to the member's adjectives and adverbs, the powers we would be giving CSIS are no greater than the powers we already give our police officers. We want to put them on a level playing field. I firmly believe we have the checks and balances in place with our police forces. They would be the same checks and balances that exist with CSIS. It has an oversight body that would ensure this legislation would meet with the desired results.

CSIS is there to keep us safe. CSIS is not the enemy of Canada. CSIS is our friend, our protector and is there to ensure the safety and security of Canadians. This is why we need to ensure we give that organization the tools it needs to do its job.

● (1310)

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind my colleague across the floor that when he says CSIS has an oversight mechanism, it has something like an oversight mechanism, but it is certainly not to international best standard. That is why my colleague, the member for Vancouver Quadra, has a private member's bill in the House. It could easily be migrated into this bill if the government were so inclined. It would actually create a parliamentary all-party committee to oversee CSIS. That is the case with our four partners in the five eyes structure that we so robustly support. That is one thing I would like him to address.

The second is this. Why has the government not already enforced the legislation it has in place? We were told at committee by CSIS and RCMP that at least 80 Canadians, and we heard a parliamentary secretary say today that number was 145, have been involved in terrorist activities outside of Canada on foreign soil. Why has there not been a single prosecution with respect to those 80 or 145 Canadians, depending on the number the government is now putting forward?

Finally, along the same lines, why did the government reveal on October 15 that it had failed to implement provisions of the 2011 boarder security agreement with the U.S. on information sharing with respect to the travel of potential terrorists?

There is a lot of explaining that needs to be done, which is why the bill has to go to committee and have a very thorough hearing.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, I find the member's comments interesting. The Liberal Party was the government for some 13 years before this. If the oversight body is that bad, why did the Liberals not do something about it? It is funny how when it is the third party, it begins to see the light and things happen. Quite frankly, it was good enough in their 13 years, and I accept that. I believe this oversight body is good enough for us now. It has done, and is doing, a fine job.

With regard to why the police, CSIS or someone not laying charges against this person or that person, after 30 years of policing and people sitting back quarterback judging, I would like the police and the authorities do their jobs. There are reasons things happen and there are sometimes reasons things do not happen. I leave it up to the people who do the job. It is not members of Parliament who are investigating these 80 or 140 people.

When we stand here and begin to criticize authorities because they did not do something or should be doing something, we are meddling in affairs about which we have to be careful. Let us let the police and CSIS authorities do their job as to when it is appropriate

for charges to be laid, or not laid. There is intelligence going on here and we should not be second-guessing the people who are here to make us feel safe. I trust their judgement and will support them from this very chair. From this side of the House, our Conservative government supports our law enforcement agencies.

● (1315)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are having a decent debate here, but I would like to have more. It is too bad we now have time allocation on it and will also not get much discussion on it at committee. However, with the time I do have, I want to touch on a key theme, which is accountability and how it applies to this act.

Of course national security is an important issue that we all take seriously, especially after recent events. However, over the past decades it has been something that all countries have taken seriously. We have had to balance national security and what keeps us safe versus accountability to ensure things do not go too far in terms of protecting privacy and the rights of citizens.

There are two kinds of accountability. With CSIS, there is the idea of accountability to the public and to the legislature. That is one general aspect. However, there is also our accountability to the Canadian public to ensure we are doing our due diligence when we are considering these laws. Therefore, the history of the previous reviews of national security are worth looking at, because they show us how past parliamentarians have shown respect for the public in considering these issues. Professor Reg Whitaker, who is a famous expert in this area, has done a lot of work reviewing this in the past, and I will borrow from some of his work today.

In the review of this, my colleagues may come across the 1969 MacKenzie report, which was really the first major review of Canadian security that we have done in this country. It was an extensive report. However, even the generation of the report was difficult, because the government could not decide how much to keep public and how much to keep private. The 1969 MacKenzie report did not come out with much of a recommendation. However, a few months later we had very serious incidents occur in the province of Quebec—the FLQ crisis and the murder of a cabinet minister. Some had viewed the actions by what was then the RCMP security forces as a huge overreaction, because not only were the separatists in Quebec investigated but it was if they threw a giant net over anybody who might be deemed suspicious. Therefore, people who were in union or left-wing organizations were under surveillance and in some cases detained, which led to a huge scandal.

Government Orders

I think that still sticks with many of us today, seeing as how an overreaction by a security force can not only endanger those who are involved but can cause huge national strife. Therefore, the McDonald commission reported on that in 1977. It was set up to review what had happened in Quebec and to also look at our national security service in general. It was from the McDonald commission that we had the suggestion of the creation of CSIS.

What is interesting about this report is that it came out in 1977 but it took a full three years for the government to respond. There was not a response until 1980 because these kinds of issues require serious attention and consideration: the setting up of an entirely new security body, determining which powers stayed with the RCMP and which went with the security service, deciding how this was all supposed to be administered and funded, and those types of things. It took a full three years before there was even a response to the report. It was another four years before CSIS was officially created in 1984.

This was a major undertaking but also showed the amount of consideration past parliamentarians have shown when it comes to issues of security. It stands in stark contrast to what is happening in the House today, where we have a limit on debate on this bill and these changes, and we will also have limits at committee. It is important to note that, if we are to make any changes to this body, much more consideration and time should be given for all aspects of society to come in and explain their points of view.

• (1320)

What I found astounding from the questions earlier was that the members on the other side were essentially saying that the committee is totally irrelevant. They are saying we have heard everything we had to hear and we do not have to worry about committee work at all because we have already heard it. They are saying there is nothing that could possibly be said that would be of interest or that could help.

I find that arrogant. I do not think there is any other word for it. When we are dealing with something that is so important that we have to get the balance right, hearing from more than eight people would seem to be a good idea.

I will give an example from the bill. CSIS would now be empowered, if there is a warrant granted, to break the laws of other countries when it is carrying out surveillance of people of whom it might be suspicious. We can think about how that may cause trouble. This is, of course, a clause that would be written into the act. If we think about it, a security intelligence officer might go to a Canadian judge and get a warrant for surveillance of somebody in another country; and that might be fine. This person may be of particular interest, but what is concerning to me is who that person is talking to.

For instance, let us say that CSIS is carrying out surveillance on an international businessperson who is from another country and flies to Washington, D.C. That businessperson then starts to talk to different members of American organizations, perhaps the government or other business interests in Washington, and all of a sudden, we have a warrant that has been issued to a CSIS officer who can then apply that warrant in the national capital of the United States. The officer could carry out surveillance not only on this

businessperson who is under suspicion but also on whoever that businessperson is talking to.

We can see how we could run into considerable difficulty there. If this is allowed to go ahead and it is not changed through our very short committee considerations, we could see how it could cause difficulty, because the United States also has security forces and they might notice this. We then have international incidents that would, of course, cause us considerable difficulty.

It may also mean that other security forces may be less inclined to co-operate with us. This is the kind of thing we should be conscious of. It is one example of how extra consideration of these powers is warranted.

What we are seeing is a bit of a rush. We hear all kinds of rhetoric from the other side about the very serious events we had here and how they prompt this legislation; but this legislation was drafted before all of those events. This has been on the government's agenda for some time. Again, we should have had ample time to have full consideration of this, but there seems to be a great disrespect for this place and for others who may want to comment on this bill by again shutting down debate in the House and within committee.

I cannot tell members how much consideration to give the balance between accountability and efficiency or effectiveness of security services, in order to get it just right. Although we are supporting this to go to committee, I would urge the committee to take some time to make sure we have the proper witnesses, not just government witnesses who will back up what it wants to do. I know that the committee has some jurisdiction to this. It is not just told by the PMO exactly what to do. I urge the committee to have witnesses who will challenge this and bring up scenarios and situations that members perhaps have not spoken or thought about, so that we get this right and do not face some kind of international incident that causes embarrassment.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague for a very sincere and thoughtful speech. He has raised a number of important, probative questions around the bill, which seemingly the government does not want to answer. The government has had a series of questions put to it here again today. The minister, several parliamentary secretaries, and countless MPs have refused to answer.

I want to ask how risky the member thinks that is. I am reminded, very much, of what happened in the United States post 9-11, in terms of the American response to a lot of the security challenges that, at that time, Congress and Capitol Hill were facing.

There has been a lot of backtracking in the United States. There has been a lot of concern about the amount of power and authority vested in its intelligence and security agencies and collection services, for example.

Maybe the member could take a moment to explain to Canadians why it is so important for us to take the time we need to improve. Everybody in this House wants to improve what we are trying to improve today. Collectively, everyone wants to make it better.

What are some of the inherent risks in going too quickly and not hearing from some of the best minds available in the country?

Government Orders

• (1325)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure working with my colleague on various committees. My colleague is right. “Haste makes waste” may be the proper term here if we try to rush this through and do not properly investigate the possible ramifications. We could run into all kinds of problems.

Actually, the history of CSIS itself shows that in the past there have been considerable problems; for example, with CSIS providing evidence in court. There have been investigations of how CSIS was not providing proper information during court hearings. Again, that is where proper oversight could come into play.

If there were proper oversight, if we did not just have an oversight committee that is often packed with government cronies rather than actual folks who are dedicated to the job, then we would not have these mistakes. That is a concern, not only international embarrassment but actually serious infringements of Canadians' rights.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's speech. He raised a really essential point about this bill: if we are expanding CSIS' powers when the organization was established because of abuses of authority, then we certainly have to be looking at increasing accountability for CSIS.

I wonder if the member has any remarks about the current system of accountability in CSIS, especially in view of the annual report this year in which SIRC said that CSIS did not provide full and complete information in a timely manner to allow it to exercise its responsibilities for oversight.

That is a key of the hon. member's speech and of the essence of this bill.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the excellent work he has done on this and other bills in his role as the public safety critic.

The key here is prudence. Why risk a large mistake? Why not have increased oversight initially? If it is found to be too onerous and there are a few problems, then perhaps it could be adjusted at that point. It is better than doing it the other way around, which is to really limit oversight, have a problem, and then correct it later.

The history of CSIS has shown that is the case. There have been problems that had to be corrected. I would say that prudence in this case would be a better response: perhaps make some accountability changes to make sure that CSIS fully discloses information to the oversight body and is compelled to do so; appoint good people who know what they are doing and who are objective; then review that oversight later to see if it is indeed too onerous.

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of our government's unwavering commitment to protect Canadians from terrorism and I am proud of our government's decision to stand with our allies in an international mission to counter the threat ISIL poses to the Middle East and, by extension, to the world. I am also proud of the fact that when our government says it is committed to giving our intelligence services the tools they need to keep Canadians safe, we follow through with decisive action.

In that spirit, I am pleased to rise today in support of the protection of Canada from terrorism act. Before I begin the substantive portion of my remarks, I would like to take the time to mention a couple of the recent events that brought the terrorist threat home for many Canadians.

On October 20, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent was killed by a jihadist just outside of Montreal. The individual responsible for this terrorist attack was known to authorities, but because of the lack of appropriate legislative tools, he was able to execute his sadistic plot. On October 22, just steps from where we stand today, Corporal Nathan Cirillo was killed by a jihadist bent on terror. These horrific terrorist attacks—and, indeed, they were terrorist attacks—underscore the need for new tools for our security agencies.

Some may say that there are already tools on the books right now and that we need not overreact. To that I would make two comments.

First, two brave Canadian heroes are dead and families are ripped apart. It is clear to me that the status quo is unacceptable.

Second, we will not overreact. We will not give up our fundamental Canadian values of respect for individual rights, but we must stop under-reacting to the threats that we are facing. The bill before us today is an important first step in doing just that.

This bill contains two separate sets of amendments. First, it proposes certain technical amendments to the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act to allow revocation of citizenship provisions to come into force earlier than anticipated. These provisions, which are already part of an act that received royal assent, include expanding the grounds for revocation. This includes authorizing the revocation of citizenship of dual citizens who have served as members of an armed force or an organized armed group engaged in armed conflict with Canada, as well as those who have been convicted of terrorism, treason, or spying. It includes as well a streamlined decision-making process that would authorize the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to make decisions on revoking Canadian citizenship, depending on the grounds.

The second part of the legislation, which is what I will focus most of the rest of my remarks on today, are the amendments being proposed to the CSIS Act.

For the last 30 years, CSIS has played a vital role in ensuring a safe and secure Canada. The threats we face as a country today have changed significantly since then, but the CSIS Act, the legislation that governs CSIS, has not. With the bill before us, we are taking a critical step forward in ensuring that CSIS is well positioned to confront terrorist threats as they exist today.

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It is useful to provide a bit of context about the work of CSIS and the associated sections of the CSIS Act that govern that work.

Section 12 of the CSIS Act mandates CSIS to collect and analyze intelligence on threats to the security of Canada and, in relation to those threats, to report to and advise the Government of Canada.

Section 16 of the CSIS Act authorizes CSIS to collect within Canada foreign intelligence relating to the capabilities, intentions, or activities of a foreign state or group of foreign states. This is subject to the restriction that its activities cannot be directed at Canadian citizens, permanent residents, or corporations.

Sections 13, 14, and 15 authorize CSIS to provide security assessments to the Government of Canada, provincial governments, and other Canadian and foreign institutions; to provide advice to ministers of the crown on matters related to the Citizenship Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; and to conduct investigations to perform these functions.

• (1330)

Clearly these are all very challenging mandates, and fulfilling them requires that CSIS use a suite of investigative techniques. These techniques can include, for example, open source research, physical surveillance, interviews, and analyzing intelligence from a variety of sources. What is particularly important to note here is the importance that human sources play in allowing CSIS to fulfill its mandate to investigate and advise on threats to Canada's security.

Other techniques used by CSIS are more intrusive in nature. These techniques may include, among other things, searches of a target's place of residence, analysis of financial records, or telecommunication intercepts.

CSIS is required to obtain warrants under the CSIS Act to pursue intrusive investigative techniques. In order to obtain a warrant, CSIS must satisfy a designated Federal Court judge that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a warrant is required to enable CSIS to investigate a threat to the security of Canada or to perform its duties and functions under section 16 of the CSIS Act.

In addition, co-operation with domestic agencies is also critical. Section 17 of the CSIS Act now authorizes CSIS, with the approval of the minister, to co-operate with any department of the Government of Canada or the government of a province or any police force in that province. Therefore, CSIS works closely with the RCMP, the Canada Border Services Agency, and other government departments and police forces across our nation.

When it comes to investigating threat-related activities occurring outside of Canada, CSIS's relationship with Communications Security Establishment Canada, or CSE, is particularly important. CSIS relies heavily on the capabilities and expertise of the CSE in order to conduct telecommunication intercepts outside of Canada. CSE's legal authority to provide assistance to CSIS stems from paragraph 273.64(1)(c) of the National Defence Act.

The CSIS Act authorizes CSIS to enter into an arrangement or otherwise co-operate with a government of a foreign state or an institution of that state with the approval of the Minister of Public Safety after consulting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Co-operation with foreign entities is critical to CSIS's ability to fulfill its

mandate. Individuals being investigated often leave Canada to engage in a wide range of threat-related activities. No country can assess the full range of threats on its own, and CSIS must be able to work with foreign partners, subject to oversight by the Minister of Public Safety and a review by the Security Intelligence Review Committee.

Now that I have outlined some of the important work that CSIS does and how the CSIS Act allows for that work, I will speak to how this legislation would allow CSIS to move effectively and operate in the evolving threat environment.

Specifically, the bill would confirm CSIS's authority to conduct investigations outside of Canada related to threats to the security of Canada and to conduct security assessments. It would confirm that the Federal Court can issue warrants for CSIS to investigate, within or outside of Canada, threats to the security of our nation.

The bill would give the Federal Court authority to consider only relevant Canadian law when issuing warrants to authorize CSIS to undertake certain intrusive activities outside of Canada.

The bill would protect the identity of CSIS human sources from disclosure and protect the identity of any CSIS employees who may engage in covert activities in the future.

These are all measured changes that would amend the legislation governing CSIS's activities so that it would have the clear ability and authority to investigate threats to the security of Canada wherever those threats might occur.

I urge all members to support this legislation. It would give our security agencies much-needed tools to protect all Canadians and our nation.

• (1335)

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we in the NDP agree with most of what is in this bill. We look forward to getting it to committee to make some amendments.

One of the things we are most concerned about is the oversight of CSIS activities. My colleague talked about the evolution of the threat of terrorism; in fact, the largest terrorist occurrence in Canada was some 20 to 25 years ago, the Air India incident. That was a major terrorist attack on Canadians in Canada.

We have dealt with terrorism in the past. We have done certain things, and if we look at the record of CSIS during that time, we would think that civilian oversight would have served Canada well in determining how that particular large and tragic incident occurred and how things transpired between the agencies that dealt with it. Civilian oversight by Canadians would have made a difference in how we viewed that event and how we moved on from it. Would my colleague not agree?

Government Orders

• (1340)

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, what I would say is that Canadians and the security intelligence agencies, whether CSIS or any others involved, including Canadians affected by that tragedy, would have benefited far more from the tools that we would provide today in this legislation than they would from an oversight committee to explore how it happened. Preventing that activity would have been far more beneficial to Canadians than reviewing it and trying to find lessons learned.

This body of legislation would take lessons learned from that event and from the most recent terrorist events in North America right here in our country to ensure we are not reviewing them to see what we could do better the next time it happens.

The intention of this legislation is to give the Canadian Security Intelligence Agency the opportunity, the means, and the tools it needs to stop these events from occurring. It is not to review them, in effect, but to prevent them. That is what Canadians deserve, that is what Canadians expect, and that is what this government is going to deliver for our nation.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question that goes back to the beginning of my colleague's comments.

He made a rather incredible assertion, one I have not heard before from anyone in any party, and certainly not from the government. I want to read back his words. He said that the events last month, which occurred here in my home city of Ottawa, "occurred because of the lack of legislative tools available." That is the first time this House, I believe, has heard that kind of assertion.

He then went on to say in his closing remarks that he was looking forward to learning from what transpired here with these unfortunate events last month, and improving the situation, which we all agree is the objective of Bill C-44.

Can the member explain to Canadians precisely how he has concluded that it was a lack of legislative tools that led to the tragedies that took place in this city a month ago?

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, it is well known that when law enforcement agencies and security intelligence agencies have the tools that we are going to be able to provide—whether it is intercepts, utilization of human sources, or carrying on with investigative techniques that they did not have the ability to do—these tools are going to help these agencies recognize a threat before the threat manifests itself in a very real way, as happened not only in Quebec but here in Ottawa. It only stands to reason that providing the agencies with these tools is going to help them cut off these kinds of threats before they happen.

Will they prevent absolutely everything in our country? No, that is pretty clear. The tools will not stop every single threat that we face, but I do not think anybody is proposing that we are going to eliminate absolutely every threat in the nation. What we do recognize clearly is that this legislation would provide the tools that law enforcement and security intelligence agencies are telling us they need in order to gather appropriate information in an effective manner and to share that information with one another so that they

can start to act on that information in a more meaningful way to try to reduce the volume and the intensity of some of these events.

As the member across the way mentioned in his initial question, terrorist events were occurring a long way back. However, although they are not happening now with necessarily the same level of intensity in one single event, they are certainly happening more frequently than we have ever seen before. These are tragic events that need to be dealt with, and we are taking that responsibility very seriously.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it really is a privilege to be here this afternoon to participate. This is one of those debates that cuts to the very core, the pith, of what we are doing here as parliamentarians and legislators. Bill C-44, which amends the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and other acts, is very profound. It speaks to the powers of the state and the rights and responsibilities of our citizenry.

Moments ago the member for Selkirk—Interlake asked a question of the NDP speaker at the time, asking if New Democrats were prepared to give more rights to terrorists than to law-abiding Canadian citizens. That is another astonishing assertion, and it reminds me of the very famous passage in the brilliant play written by Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*, which is the story of the life of Thomas More, who is being prosecuted.

The prosecutor is William Roper, who says to Thomas More, "So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law"? Sir Thomas More responds, "Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil"? William Roper responds to the prosecutor, "I'd cut down every law in England to do that!", to which Sir Thomas More responds, "Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you—where would you hide"? "Yes" says Thomas More, "I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake."

That is precisely what we are talking about when we discuss the balance the government continues to allude to when it comes to making sure that our intelligence and security services have the power and authority to do their jobs, while at the same time safeguarding our rights. When we play fast and loose with our rights, it is a very dangerous game.

Bill C-44 is trying to make some positive improvements to the status quo. I think everyone in the House agrees with this. However, there are series of profound and probative questions that have been put to the government that remain unanswered. These are deserving of an answer, because they do cut to the chase and speak to whether or not we would give the benefit of law to the devil.

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There are questions, for example, like why the government cannot explain why legislation already in place has not been enforced. Specifically, under the provisions of the Criminal Code brought in by the government in 2013 in the Combating Terrorism Act, why have we not seen a single prosecution? I raised the question earlier to a former peace officer who has sworn an oath to uphold the rule of law, and his answer was, “You’re criticizing law enforcement agencies.” I am doing nothing of the kind. I am asking why, if we know there are anywhere between 80 and 145 Canadians who have been abroad participating in terrorist activities on foreign soil, there has not been a single prosecution under the new powers brought in by the government just a short year ago?

Canadians deserve an answer from the government. The sections of the Criminal Code are 83.18, which relate to laying a charge against an individual attempting to leave Canada to participate in a terrorist activity; or 83.3, which could be used to place recognizance and conditions on those suspected of terrorist activity; and section 810, related to peace bonds and possible detention. We have not received an answer.

• (1345)

The government likes to speak about being a sovereign state and having its own standards—not being bound by its partnership with the Five Eyes, and not relating to the work and best practices of the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and New Zealand. It says that it is sovereign when it comes to security issues, yet when it comes to climate change, we have hitched our wagon to President Obama. There we are not sovereign. However, let us take the Conservatives at their word that they are sovereign when it comes to questions of security laws and the enforcement of those laws. Well then, why is it that on October 15 we learned that the Conservative government has failed to implement provisions of the 2011 border security agreement with the United States on information sharing with respect to the travel of potential terrorists?

It is troubling to hear the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, or even worse, the Prime Minister, talk about new legislation, new powers that we need, when existing international agreements we have entered into and signed have not been complied with, including on the international movement of those suspected of being associated with terrorists entities. That question remains to be answered.

We hear repeatedly from members of the government, and in particular former peace officers, like the last speaker from the Yukon, who swear an oath to uphold the rule of law. They become peace officers by swearing an oath. We hear from them repeatedly that we need new powers, but that is not what we hear from the front-line practitioners. That is not what we have heard from CSIS. That is not what we heard from the RCMP. They are telling us that they need more resources and the capacity to do their jobs. They need to be able to follow up on the existing statutory powers that we have in order to enforce them and to bring them to bear in Canadian society. That is what they are telling the Canadian population. That is what they are telling parliamentarians.

We are supportive of sending the bill back to committee. However, we need the time in committee to make sure that we get that expertise, not from the propaganda or rhetoric of government

members, but from those who are actually on the front lines involved in enforcement. They are our best asset and allies in this regard.

Mr. Ryan Leef: Fourteen of us over here and zero on your side.

Mr. David McGuinty: The member said there are 14 of them over there. Unfortunately, as former peace officers, none of them have the courage of their convictions to stand up and tell the truth in this matter, which is that front-line enforcement officers are telling us that they need more resources.

In closing, and to remind Canadians that governments do make choices, \$600 million has been spent on advertising in the last eight years, and \$600 million more on hiring outside lawyers by the Department of Justice when there are 2,500 lawyers on staff already. That amounts to \$1 billion that could be directed more properly to the enforcement of our existing powers.

• (1350)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague might provide some further thought regarding the Five Eyes and those countries that want to work with Canada.

Here we have found that Canada has fallen short in terms of having an independent parliamentary overview of some of these very important issues, such as privacy. We are the only country out of the Five Eyes that has not seen fit to include or incorporate parliamentarians as part of that oversight. Would there in fact be some value in doing that?

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, I think this is one of the most glaring gaps in the bill. If the government were honest in its examination of best international practices today, it would say that the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, the four foundational partners in the so-called Five Eyes partnership, have all moved forward, particularly the United States, which has made a lot of mistakes. The congressional leadership in the U.S. will tell us that they made a lot of mistakes because they over-reacted after 9/11. Since then they have tried to move the balance back to the centre.

Part of that involves, as my colleague for Vancouver Quadra has put forward in her bill, Bill C-622, the idea that we would create an all-party committee to oversee the important work of CSIS. That would be foundational to improving the status quo, which is something for the life of us on this side of the House cannot understand why the government would not be embracing.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated the speech given by the hon. member for Ottawa South.

Statements by Members

The hon. member for Yukon seemed to be suggesting that Bill C-44 is a response to very specific events that took place in October. However, when I look at Bill C-44, which existed before the events of October 22, I see that it is a response to all of the jurisprudence that has existed since 2007 in relation to this issue.

That includes the 2007 Supreme Court ruling in *R. v. Hape* concerning CSIS's powers, the 2008 Federal Court ruling in which Justice Blanchard stated that section 12 of the act did not contain extraterritorial provisions with respect to covert surveillance, and the 2013 Federal Court ruling by Justice Mosley, who learned of the practice of obtaining warrants to conduct surveillance overseas and called CSIS in and informed them that this practice was not legal.

Can the hon. member explain why it took so long for this government to introduce a bill designed to increase CSIS's powers to combat terrorism?

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, that is a series of questions that should be put directly to expert witnesses at committee. That is why the government should not just speed ahead and should ensure that the committee has the time it needs to hear all of the viewpoints from all of the necessary experts.

This is a very important issue for Canadian society. We are talking about a balance between protecting human rights and granting surveillance powers to our police forces and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. We need to move slowly, *pianissimo*, as they say in Italian, so that we are sure to strike that balance.

[English]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated the intervention by my colleague, the member for Ottawa South. It shed a great deal of light on many of the issues around the legislation.

However, getting back to his earlier question for the member for Yukon, I did not quite get the essence of the answer, or even if there were an answer by the member in response to the fair question posed about whether the senseless tragedy that took place here on the Hill recently could have been averted with changes to the regulations and laws.

I wonder if he has any sense as to where that rationale would come from?

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is, no. I think I posed a fair question for the member for Yukon, who, to restate what he said, stated that the events last month occurred “due to the lack of appropriate legislative tools” available.

I asked the member for Yukon and the government to describe and explain exactly how that was. What was the causal connection that he was asserting? It was a very serious assertion to make. What powers were not already in place that could perhaps have trumped or prevented this from occurring? Where have CSIS, the RCMP, or our law enforcement agencies said publicly that they need X new power or Y new power to make sure that this does not happen again? The government has not explained this.

This is precisely why we need to get this to committee and ask the tough and probative questions so that we can make sure that we achieve what Aristotle once described in French as *le juste milieu*,

the right balance between the powers we invest in our law enforcement agencies and that human rights that make our Canadian lifestyle the best in the world.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

AMATEUR HOCKEY

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, in 1995 thousands of kids were born in Montreal, including my son, Carlo. Five years later, my son and roughly 50 other kids signed up to play amateur hockey for the very first time, in Saint-Leonard, and got to benefit from my stellar coaching.

One of those kids I coached, Anthony Duclair, made it to the NHL this year as a member of the New York Rangers. Congratulations, Anthony. It would be easy to say that I knew back then that he would make it, but the reality is that Anthony and his childhood teammates were just like millions of other young Canadian athletes. There is no way to tell where youth sports will take them. A select few will make it to the highest levels, while the vast majority will not, but this does not make some better than the others. What really matters is that they all got the opportunity to learn important life skills through amateur sports.

Anthony, through years of hard work, has earned every bit of success he is achieving. I am certain that his parents and everyone who helped him along the way are filled with pride seeing him reach these new heights, myself included.

To my son Carlo and all of Anthony's pre-novice teammates, the job market out there is pretty rough, so do not forget the life skills learned at the rink. They will be needed.

* * *

SGT. MARK GALLAGHER MEMORIAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, October saw the culmination of years of work when the Sgt. Mark Gallagher Memorial Vocational School opened in Haiti. The school educates students in agriculture, carpentry, masonry, secretarial, flooring, and tiling.

When RCMP Sgt. Gallagher and many others were killed in the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, it was a tragedy to the people of that country and to many New Brunswickers.

Mark's concern for the youth of Haiti was carried on by a committed group of people called the Friends of Mark Gallagher, who envisioned building a school in Haiti in Mark's memory through a partnership with Les Petites Soeurs de Ste-Thérèse. A massive local fundraising effort ensued with qualified NGOs, such as l'Association québécoise pour l'avancement des Nations unies, and our government, through CIDA, to turn their vision into reality.

*Statements by Members***CANADIAN MUSEUMS DAY**

The Friends of Mark Gallagher, along with the province of New Brunswick community college network, the RCMP, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the Woodstock Rotary Club, and Mark's family have seen their dream realized. I am happy to report that on October 13, the school opened its doors to the first set of students, with the official opening set for next week. The children, the very people who were on the mind of Mark Gallagher during his assignment with the RCMP in Haiti, will be the beneficiaries of something good for many years to come.

* * *

*[Translation]***STUDENTS AT THE BOISÉ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN SEPT-ÎLES**

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Friday I celebrated National Child Day, a UNICEF Canada initiative, with students at the Boisé elementary school in Sept-Îles.

My conversations with the student council were very relevant. The topics we discussed included politics, the environment, poverty, bullying, and cyberbullying, the role of family, peace, and caring, which illustrates the children's openness and their involvement in our society.

What the young people had to say at my meeting seems to indicate the rise of a generation that is well aware that being environmental citizens is of paramount importance in enacting public policy. That is in fact the mandate they gave to me as I returned to the Hill.

I want to thank the principal of the Boisé school and the parliamentarians for this rewarding meeting, which was quite hopeful from a citizenship perspective.

* * *

*[English]***MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with this Friday being Survivors of Suicide Loss Day, I would like to highlight an innovation that I believe will result in fewer deaths by suicide.

My home of Waterloo region is known for innovations in the high-tech and agricultural sectors, but today I highlight an innovation in mental health. Here 24/7 is the work of 12 local agencies. It serves as a concierge service for people experiencing mental health challenges or suicidal ideation. They take care of the process, leaving the patient free to focus on healing.

The first program of its kind in Ontario, Here 24/7 was launched on April 1 and expected to handle 31,000 cases over the year. Instead, it handled 37,000 cases in just its first six months.

Here 24/7's story is typical for mental health across Canada: non-profits on shoestring budgets perform heroics to meet a demand that is overwhelming. I challenge our community to support their work.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is Canadian Museums Day. This is a day when we celebrate our museums, their importance, and their vital link to our country's heritage.

[Translation]

We must celebrate our museums not just for their beauty and artistic richness, for the pleasure derived from visiting them and the emotions they evoke, but also because they are an awakening of our knowledge: an extension of the classroom: a keeper of our memories, both those of Canada and of other cultures: a connection with nature, a driver of tourism, economic development' and scientific progress: and so much more.

[English]

I encourage my honourable colleagues to meet today with the various museum organizations on the Hill so that we can all become better legislators for Canadian museums.

* * *

● (1405)

INSURANCE INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today members of the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association are in Ottawa. They are meeting with parliamentarians to discuss critical issues, such as pensions and long-term care, that impact the lives of all Canadians.

Insurance companies across Canada play a vital role in our economy, ensuring financial security and protection for over 26 million Canadians. In my riding, Equitable Life as well as Sun Life, Manulife, and FaithLife Financial are all major employers. They are also strong and dynamic partners who give back to the community through volunteer and charitable initiatives.

The CLHIA is a strong voice for the sector, providing leadership on social policy issues and demonstrating a commitment to enhancing the well-being of families and communities. I thank the members of CLHIA for contributing to our nation's prosperity.

* * *

HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, all Hamiltonians are tremendously proud of our city. Recently dubbed the "Comeback Kid of Canadian cities" by the *Ontario Business Report*, Hamilton is well on its way to establishing a future that may well rival its impressive past. Quality, well-paying jobs have begun to return to our city, with more on the way.

Statements by Members

Hamilton Health Sciences network, a network of six local hospitals, is now the city's largest employer, accounting for 10,000 jobs. Twelve per cent of Hamilton's workforce is now employed in health care and social services, while information and cultural industries employ about 13%.

From Canada Bread to Canmet, the federal government's material and metals laboratory located in the McMaster Innovation Park, to the hundreds of millions of dollars invested by ArcelorMittal Dofasco to upgrade its facilities across the city, to the revitalized arts communities in more neighbourhoods than I can name here, Hamilton is now seen as one of Canada's inspirational leaders for innovative development. We are so proud.

* * *

CANADIAN EXECUTIVE SERVICES ORGANIZATION

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the excellence and dedication of the men and women working within the Canadian Executive Services Organization, or CESO.

For over fifty years, CESO volunteers have tirelessly donated their time towards helping create better lives and stronger economies worldwide. Made up of senior executives from the private and public sectors in Canada with over 25 years of experience, CESO volunteer advisers are currently involved in over 47,000 assignments in 122 countries.

In all of its projects worldwide, CESO looks to inspire positive social change and economic development where it is needed most. In Canada, CESO's economic development capacity-building program provides important services that help first nations communities and businesses grow. Last year, 66 of its assignments were supported by community partnerships and private-public collaboration.

It is volunteers like David and Pat Evershed, who are here with us today, who help CESO in strengthening local institutions to help shape their own paths towards economic development.

Mr. Speaker and honoured members, it is with great pride that I extend an invitation to the CESO reception this evening, where members can find out more about the stewardship and excellence of its dedicated volunteers.

* * *

SUNSHINE FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): I am honoured to rise today to pay tribute to a group of amazing people from my riding of London North Centre who are meeting with members of Parliament today.

Since 1987, the Sunshine Foundation of Canada has been trusted by families and health care providers to make dreams come true for kids across the country. Sunshine is the only national Canadian charity fulfilling dreams for kids with severe physical disabilities or life-threatening illnesses, giving them the opportunity to build confidence as they see their dreams come true.

Sunshine fulfills dreams in two ways. One is with one-day whirlwind DreamLift adventures that transport 80 children by plane to a Disney theme park. I had the honour of being at the very first

one 25 years ago. It also fulfills individual dreams, like meeting a hockey hero or having a customized racing chair or tricycle.

If members were to have the great fortune to meet with one of Sunshine's team today, they would note just how deeply they care for Canada's kids.

I welcome all members to drop by the Speaker's lounge today at four o'clock to hear more about the great work being done. I thank the volunteers at Sunshine for caring and for giving kids the confidence to dream big.

* * *

VOLUNTEERS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker I rise to pay tribute to organizations, businesses, and individuals who give so much to ensure that people of all circumstances can celebrate the holidays. Today I highlight the work of two remarkable women with long histories of local activism who were worthy recipients of Queen's Jubilee Medals.

Elliot Lake's Darla Hennessey is well known for community work and as founder of the Christmas Store, which helps children find gifts for family members. The program has strong support from the community, including the City of Elliot Lake.

Likewise, Mindemoya's Marion Seabrook created Shopping for Kids to help Manitoulin Island youth with gifts for their families. The program has support from the community, host Mindemoya United Church, and even places off island, because the spirit of giving has no boundaries.

Unfortunately, Marion lost her battle with cancer a couple of days ago, but her legacy will carry on. We extend our deepest sympathy to Marion's family and friends and also express our appreciation for people like Marion and Darla who embody the spirit of giving that makes our communities much stronger.

* * *

● (1410)

MINING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is Mining Day on the Hill. Our government is proud to support the mining sector, which provides good-paying jobs for over 400,000 Canadians, including over 10,000 aboriginal people. It is clear that our government's plan for responsible resource development is working and helping to grow our economy.

Canada remains the world's number one destination for mineral exploration in the world and attracts 16% of global investment. Taken as a whole, the natural resource sector accounts for 1.8 million Canadian jobs and almost one-fifth of Canada's GDP.

While the NDP bashes every form of resource development and the Liberals randomly pick and choose which kind they like, our government stands firm in its support for the natural resource sector and the hard-working Canadian men and women it employs.

* * *

[Translation]

MENTAL HEALTH

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, I have been surprised to see just how engaged the people of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles are when it comes to issues of mental health. First of all, the Quebec branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association moved into the riding only five months ago, and already it has organized an event called La fête des voisins au travail. This initiative aims to improve the quality of life of workers by addressing one of the primary causes for absenteeism: mental health problems.

I would also like to welcome a group of students from Saint-Jean-Eudes school who are taking part in the national youth anti-stigma summit.

We can be proud of these two new ambassadors who will serve as agents of change in Canadian society

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, hard-working families in my riding of Richmond Hill are applauding our Prime Minister's announcement of our government's family tax cut, which will benefit every family across our great nation.

Under our family tax cut, every family with children will have more money to spend on their priorities as a family. The majority of the benefits will go to low- and middle-income families. For instance, a single mother, with two children, earning \$30,000 will benefit by a whopping \$1,500 per year, but the Liberal leader promised to reverse this tax relief and force hard-working middle-class families to pay more. We reject the Liberal leader's high-tax policies.

Our Conservative government has kept our promise to families, and we continue to stand with them. After all, we know there are only two people who know what is best for their kids: mom and dad.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, early this morning in Jerusalem, two Palestinian men wielding knives, axes, and guns stormed a synagogue, killing four people and injuring eight, including one Canadian. This brutal attack is part of a recent escalation in terrorist violence. Indeed, on the day of the terrorist attack in this House, a terrorist attack killed a three-month-old baby in Jerusalem, and others since.

Moreover, this escalation cannot be divorced from the incitement to hate and violence and the glorification of terror propagated by much of the Palestinian media and leadership. Palestinian authority

Statements by Members

officials have praised terrorists as “heroic martyrs” and declared that Jerusalem needs blood to purify itself of Jews, while Hamas celebrated the attack and President Abbas' party's Facebook page today announced that candy was being distributed in celebration of it.

I join with all hon. members in offering our heartfelt condolences to the victims of today's attack, while we call for an end to incitement, an end to the glorification of terror, an end to the terror itself, and a commitment to peace and non-violence.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said a few moments ago, we want parents to keep their hard-earned incomes, not the government.

Under our family tax cut, every parent with children will be better off. The average benefit is over \$1,100 and every parent will now receive nearly \$2,000 per child from the enhanced universal child care benefit. However, the Liberal leader would reverse that tax relief and even said that Canadians could be convinced by him to accept a tax hike. Perhaps the Liberal leader should explain why he thinks he is better qualified to spend the money of parents than they are.

Our Conservative government is proud to be putting money back into the pockets of Canadian families, where it belongs.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

CHILD CARE

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week in Winnipeg, our leader was given a hero's welcome at the ChildCare 2020 conference.

After 30 years of broken Liberal and Conservative promises, Canadian families finally have been given some hope by the NDP plan to create 370,000 affordable daycare spaces.

The Liberals arrived empty-handed. Their leader did not even bother to go to the conference. Only Ken Dryden was present to attest to the Liberals' inability to deliver an affordable daycare program.

While the Liberals waffle and the Conservatives propose regressive policies such as income splitting, we in the NDP are working hard to make life more affordable for all Canadian families. With the creation of 370,000 affordable daycare spaces, families will finally be able to breathe a little and more women will be able to participate in the labour market.

In 2015, the choice will be clear: a tired Conservative Party, an obsolete Liberal Party, or the first NDP government, one that is attuned to the needs of Canadian families.

Oral Questions

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today in Ottawa we have the pleasure of welcoming Her Royal Highness Princess Mabel van Oranje of the Netherlands, Ashok Dyalchand, and Amina Hanga of Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage. I had the privilege of hearing their testimony today at the foreign affairs committee.

Girls Not Brides is a worldwide initiative with more than 400 members who are working in over 60 countries. Its aim is to combat and end early forced marriage. Forced marriage puts the lives of young girls at risk, denies their rights, disrupts their access to education, and severely jeopardizes their health, which undermines the development of communities and entire countries.

Recognizing the devastating effects of child, early, forced marriage, our government has made it a priority to combat this awful practice. I am proud to say that under this government's leadership, Canada made history by introducing the first stand-alone resolution on child, early, forced marriage at the United Nations General Assembly. Girls around the world deserve to live their lives to the fullest, free of early, forced marriages.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

CHILD CARE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 1984 Brian Mulroney promised a national child care plan and delivered exactly zero spaces.

In 1993, Jean Chrétien promised a national child care plan and, after 13 years in office, the Liberals delivered exactly zero spaces.

In 2006, the Prime Minister discovered at least the merits of announcing a child care policy, and he said that he would deliver, precise fellow that he is, exactly 125,000 child care spaces in Canada.

Could the Prime Minister tell us, after nine years in office, precisely how many of those 125,000 child care spaces he has actually delivered?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the NDP talks about how it can serve maybe 10% of Canadian families at best, this government announced measures just a couple of weeks ago that would benefit over four million Canadian families.

This government will continue to act for the benefit of all Canadian families.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I did not hear an answer from the Prime Minister. I will give him a hint. The answer on the number of child care spaces created by the Conservatives begins with a z.

By the way, if the Prime Minister thinks today that it is such a bad idea, why did he promise it to Canadians to get elected in 2006?

[Translation]

The Prime Minister promised to give Canadians a choice but the only choice, he is proposing is between money for the rich or more money for the rich. Is that really what he promised?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government promised to give money to over four million Canadian families. The NDP has promised to take that money away from Canadian families. That is the difference between us, the Conservatives, and the socialists.

* * *

● (1420)

TAXATION

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to give money to the richest 15% in 2015. We are promising daycare spaces at \$15 a day. That is the difference.

[English]

Canadian families are paying as much as \$2,000 a month for child care. As young people are graduating with massive student debt and heading into a morose market for young people, they are worried about whether or not they can afford to have kids.

The Prime Minister promised he would wait until the budget was balanced before more tax breaks for the rich. Why is he borrowing \$3.1 billion to pay for yet another tax giveaway for the wealthy few?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, of course, we all know the facts. Over four million Canadian families will benefit from the policies that we have announced.

However, the reason the NDP continues to oppose this and misrepresent it is because it hates money in the pockets of ordinary working families. It wants that money to go to bureaucrats and to unions, but guess what? Under our government, it is going to real working Canadians.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what counts is whose pocket they stole that money from. They took that money from the employment insurance fund. The Liberals plundered \$50 billion from the employment insurance fund and the Conservatives went on to raid another \$7 billion from it. That creates a false surplus of \$3.8 billion that comes from workers. They took that money from the pockets of workers. It is a reverse Robin Hood. This is the question: is the government proud of the fact that it is taking money from the poor to give to the rich?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is the NDP's real policy? Their real policy involves raising the employment insurance premiums paid by Canadian workers and companies by \$6 billion.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

That is the real difference. Those members want to raise by billions of dollars employment insurance premiums. Under this government, employment insurance premiums will be falling.

* * *

*[Translation]***LABOUR**

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week my colleague from Hull—Aylmer and I wrote to the Prime Minister and the leader of the Liberal Party to propose a policy for dealing with harassment on Parliament Hill.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to support our proposal to deal with harassment?

[English]

I would like to ask this of the Prime Minister. Has he reviewed our proposal for dealing with workplace harassment on the Hill, and will he support it?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sexual harassment is obviously a very serious matter. I cannot comment on the particular cases because I know nothing of the facts. However, I can say that the government has had policies in place for this for some time. I gather the Board of Internal Economy and the procedure and House affairs committee are looking at that. We would be pleased to share our existing policies with those bodies.

* * *

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tonight this House begins debate on the transparency act, a positive step toward more open government. It would strengthen our access to information system and make the Board of Internal Economy open by default.

We hope for all-party support, and in that spirit we are very open to amendments and improvements. Will the Prime Minister support sending this bill to committee for study?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is kind of rich to hear the leader of the Liberal Party talking about transparency. That is the party that voted against the Federal Accountability Act, that opposed union transparency, and that opposed transparency on first nations reserves.

This government will continue to move forward on transparency.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister personally went to Copenhagen in 2009. There, he made a commitment on behalf of Canada to reduce our carbon pollution 17% below 2005 levels.

Will Canada achieve the commitments that the Prime Minister made to the world in Copenhagen, yes or no?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised that the Liberals would want to raise the issue of carbon emissions. Under the Liberal government, they promised to reduce carbon emissions by an enormous amount and raised them by over 30%.

Under this government, for the first time in Canadian history the carbon emissions have actually fallen.

We view the recent agreement between China and the United States as a very positive step toward the Paris conference in 2015. We look forward to working with our partners in the international community.

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I take that as a no.

[Translation]

Last week, the United States and China agreed on commitments to combat climate change.

Canada's reputation is once again being tested. Instead of looking for solutions, the government has chosen to muzzle its scientists and experts.

Can the Prime Minister explain what he will do, since it appears that he will not be respecting his own Copenhagen commitments?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party signed an international agreement that did not contain any targets for China or the United States. That is why we rejected that protocol. Since we came to power, we have called for an international protocol that includes mandatory targets for all major emitters.

Now, this agreement between China and the United States is a very promising step, and we look forward to working with our international partners.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the minister is claiming that no decision has been made, the Pentagon insists that the Conservatives want to buy at least four F-35 fighter jets.

The Conservative government is getting ready to spend billions of dollars without informing Canadians or Parliament. It was that same lack of transparency and inability to control costs that put an end to the previous program. The Conservatives are clearly not learning from their mistakes.

Why is the minister refusing to tell Canadians the truth about the F-35s?

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, no decision has been made. Any statements coming from the Pentagon are completely false.

We need to ensure that our men and women in uniform have the equipment they need to do the job asked of them.

Oral Questions

That is also why the lifespan of the CF-18s will be extended until 2025.

[English]

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how is it that, despite official denials, the government is down in Washington organizing an early production date for F-35s? The Pentagon did not say that these documents were wrong or that the presentation was wrong; it said it was "...for official use only. It was to inform future decisions regarding Canada's F-35 acquisition."

The document does state that, for this proposed swap to happen, the Conservatives will have to deliver a letter of intent this month. Will the government be doing that?

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, any declarations to the effect that we have purchased four F-35s are completely incorrect. We have made no decision on replacing the CF-18 at this time.

We will also ensure that the brave men and women in uniform have the equipment they need to do the job. That is why the CF-18's life has been extended to 2025.

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GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since 2009 the Conservatives have spent over \$100 million of taxpayers' funds in self-promoting advertising while telling seniors and veterans that the cupboard is bare. Canadians are not hoodwinked. The government's own polling shows that taxpayers are sick and tired of this money being wasted on partisan self-glorification. Now the Conservatives are turning the taps on again, doing ads to promote their income-splitting scheme that would only benefit the wealthy.

I have a simple question. Will the minister tell the House how much money is being wasted on this pre-electoral partisan binge?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only the NDP could refer to a massive tax benefit for working Canadian families as a binge, a benefit that would provide up to \$2,000 of direct tax relief for families, treating families as an economic unit, that would increase the universal child care benefit provided to children between the ages of 7 and 18 from \$1,000 to \$1,700 a year. Together these constitute a total net benefit of over \$1,200 for the average family. Four million families, 100% of families with kids, are going to benefit from this government's package.

• (1430)

[Translation]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives can rattle off whatever excuses they want. The ads promoting their election gimmick, income splitting, are partisan ads paid for by taxpayers. What is more, the Conservatives do not even want to tell us how much the propaganda cost.

Come on, that makes no sense. Much like the Liberals with their sponsorship, the Conservatives are trying to buy Canadians with their own money. It is appalling.

Will the minister finally tell us how much these useless, partisan and misleading ads cost?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the hon. member is absolutely wrong. We clearly need to inform Canadian families that they can receive a new universal health care benefit for children between the ages of 7 and 18. This is one of many changes which, together, will provide \$1,200 in tax relief for each family. Every family with children under the age of 18 will receive tax benefits because of these changes. Canadians need to be informed of the significant benefits they will receive as a result of all these changes.

* * *

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration does not like refugees, but yesterday he demonstrated his utter contempt for all Canadians. Instead of acknowledging his failure to meet his government's promise to bring 1,300 additional Syrian refugees, the minister back-counted refugees from three previous years. Instead of admitting he broke his promise, he bizarrely claimed he "overfulfilled" it, whatever that means.

Will the minister abandon his mean-spirited attempts to mislead Canadians and finally live up to Canada's promises?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts: 1,800 Syrians in Canada since the start of the conflict. We have overfulfilled our commitment to bring government-assisted refugees to this country. That commitment was 200, and we have brought many more. Private sponsorships are way up in recent months. We are expecting a lot of progress on that front.

Here is what the opposition does not want Canadians to hear. In 2009, we committed to bring 20,000 Iraqis to this country as resettled refugees. We have met that target one year early.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister's pretend outrage cannot hide the fact that he keeps changing his numbers, showing his disdain for the basic Canadian value of helping the most vulnerable. He is refusing to live up to his promises on Syrian refugees, refusing to drop his expensive court battle against refugee health, and now he wants to take social assistance away from refugees.

When will the minister finally stop these blatant attacks on refugees?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is sad to see the NDP backtracking again this week, claiming that we have denied refugees health care when that is patently false. Health care remains in place. We are appealing the decision of the court, with which we have complied. That decision, which the NDP celebrates, is going to require us to give better health care to failed claimants and fraudulent claimants than Canadians actually receive.

We are the only party that can be counted on to stand up for refugees and the interests of Canadian taxpayers.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is simply embarrassing to see how inadequate the Conservatives' response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria is. There are millions of refugees—millions—and the only thing the government will promise is to try to welcome just over a thousand of them. Even then it is not keeping its promise.

The minister needs to stop inflating the numbers by adding in the admissions allowed in 2011 and tell Canadians the truth.

Why have we accepted only 200 government-assisted refugees?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have overfulfilled our commitment in this regard.

A total of 1,800 Syrians are already in Canada, and 20,000 Iraqis have arrived in Canada since 2009. That is a track record that Canadians can be and are proud of.

There is something we are wondering about: if the NDP is even the slightest bit concerned about the plight of millions of Syrian refugees, why is it not prepared to do anything to combat terrorism, revoke passports, address the foreign fighter phenomenon, and focus on the ongoing need for humanitarian aid? Our government is doing all of those things.

• (1435)

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we expect the minister to give us answers, not ask questions.

This is urgent. The crisis in Syria is happening now. As we speak, millions of people, women, children and families are in an extremely precarious situation. We do not want to know how many Syrians arrived in Canada in 2011. We want to know what the minister is doing to bring refugees to Canada in 2014.

Apart from taking health care away from refugees, can the minister finally tell us very clearly how Canada will do its part to help the people of Syria?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is clear is that almost 22,000 Syrians and Iraqis have come to Canada as a result of this government's efforts. Canada is one of the largest donors of humanitarian aid in Syria and Iraq.

What is also clear is that the NDP does not want to do anything at all to oppose the Islamic State and to fight the militants who are the real cause of all these problems and of the misery of millions of people. That is unacceptable, and Canadians know that.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder the minister is having trouble with the facts, like last night on national radio, because the facts are very embarrassing for the government. In response to a crisis generating millions of vulnerable refugees, the government agreed to take in a very small number, and then it failed to even meet that commitment. Bizarrely, ineptly, the minister tried to cover it all up and repeatedly misled Canadians. It is time to make amends.

When will the minister finally meet his own commitment to resettle an additional 1,300 Syrian refugees in Canada? When will he keep his promise to those refugees?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is like talking to some kind of Kafkaesque conversation partner. We have received 1,800 Syrian refugees in this country. That is more than 1,300. We have received 20,000 Iraqis in this country. That is more than any other country. What does the NDP not understand about these numbers?

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many young Canadians have given up looking for full-time work in the face of stagnant wages and a dire job market. According to the Canadian Federation of Students, 300,000 young Canadians are actually working for free. When we add together discouraged young job seekers who are forced to work part time and unpaid interns, we get an unemployment and underemployment rate of almost 28%. That is shameful.

Why does the government have no plan for our lost generation of young Canadians?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, happily, the youth unemployment rate in Canada is significantly below the average in the developed world. It is below the average of what it was under the previous Liberal government. This country has seen significant job creation, over 1.2 million net new jobs since the global economic downturn.

We are making significant enhancements to help young people get employed, including promoting apprenticeships. There are actually skills shortages in this country in many occupations, and we are trying to encourage provincial educators and training programs and employers to invest more in youth training so that young people can go into well-paying lifetime careers, for example, in the trades, through the apprenticeship incentive grant and completion grant, of which we have delivered more than 100,000.

Oral Questions

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada tells us that there are 200,000 fewer jobs for young Canadians than in 2008. Instead of helping, the Conservatives have actually introduced a flawed EI tax credit that rewards firms for firing workers. This is what the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives said recently: “Why not just fire your summer student or cut back her hours to get yourself under the cap? Your reward for firing a student...a tax break!”

That is also what Jack Mintz, the economist, has said—that this job credit creates a disincentive for hiring and an incentive for firing.

Why do the Conservatives not help young Canadians instead of giving a flawed job tax credit that actually hurts them?

• (1440)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a tragedy to see the member for Kings—Hants now resorting to quoting a union-NDP think tank. That is the same member who used to support income splitting. He used to support lower taxes. Now he supports more reckless spending and endless deficits, the kinds of policies that lead to killing jobs.

This government has brought the federal tax burden down to its lowest level in 60 years. We have helped provide training opportunities to over six million young Canadians. We have created the apprenticeship incentive and completion grants and the Canada apprenticeship loan. We are doing more than any government to support youth and find them employment.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was not aware that Jack Mintz was a union leader.

With over 200,000 fewer jobs for young Canadians than before the downturn, young Canadians are not getting the work experience they need. Governor Poloz says that high youth underemployment and unemployment are hurting their chances for future success, but he suggested the wrong solution: unpaid work.

A better way to offer young Canadians meaningful job experience is actually through government programs that can pay young people so they can get jobs and experience at the same time, so why did the government, last summer, create half the number of summer jobs for young Canadians than in 2005 and—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Employment and Social Development.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, Jack Mintz actually supported this government's job-creating EI premium payroll tax cut.

Second, I have to correct myself. I said earlier that we provided Canada apprenticeship grants to over 100,000 young Canadians. In fact, the real number is over 500,000. I apologize.

The member suggests that we should provide paid learning opportunities on the work site. That is exactly what we are doing through the new Canada job grant, which is being implemented by all 13 provinces and territories. Why were the Liberals against the Canada job grant?

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a report released this week outlines the complete failure of the Conservative government and previous governments when it comes to protecting species at risk. Of the 369 plant and animal species identified as endangered in 1997, 115 have seen their population drop further and 202 are still endangered.

Why does this government not take the protection of threatened species seriously?

[*English*]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting and preserving our rich biodiversity. We are quickly addressing the backlog and mess left from years of Liberal inaction. Thanks to our hard work and investments, we have posted a significant number of recovery strategies or management plans for a number of species over the last few years.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, habitat loss causes extinction.

Researchers have found that of 221 threatened or endangered species, only 56 had their critical habitat identified, let alone protected.

In fact, concerned citizens have had to drag the current government to court just to force it to follow its own endangered species laws, but still the Conservatives continue to cut enforcement and funding.

When will the minister commit the resources that are needed to protect endangered species?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting our environment. That is why we launched a new national conservation plan that would enable Canadians to conserve and restore land and water and enhance the connections between citizens and natural spaces.

We have also created two national marine conservation areas, three marine protected areas, three national wildlife areas, four national parks, and one national historic site. The total of the land we have protected is an area that is more than twice the size of Vancouver Island.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister said she is committed to protecting the environment. She should know that while the world is stepping up action to reduce emissions, Canada is falling behind.

Oral Questions

Environment Canada has shown that the Conservatives are set to miss our 2020 target by at least 20%. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment responded yesterday by saying, “Well, everyone is entitled to their own opinion.”

Does the minister believe that this is just her department's opinion, or will she actually admit to climate change caused by humans being a fact?

• (1445)

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have always said that in any international agreements to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, all major economies and emitters must do their part.

With the United States and China accounting for 39% of the global greenhouse gas emissions, we are very encouraged to see they are taking action, as Canada emits less than 2%.

We will continue to play our part by reducing emissions here at home and working with our partners across the globe to establish an international agreement that includes all major emitters without introducing a carbon tax.

* * *

[Translation]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, TransCanada's strategic plan to promote its pipeline to Quebec surfaced today.

The leaked documents show that the corporation is considering using aggressive tactics to move its project forward. The oil company has tremendous resources at its disposal to promote its project, while the people of eastern Quebec, who are worried about their environment, have the impression that their voices will never be heard.

What will this government do to ensure that the citizens and municipalities concerned are heard?

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the opposition, we will not take a position until the review is completed.

The National Energy Board is mandated to listen to those who are directly affected and have relevant information or knowledge in that area. We base our decisions on science and facts, not on ideology. We have been clear: projects will only proceed if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of National Defence please provide the House with an update on Operation Impact and Canada's ongoing mission to

confront and degrade the military capacities of the terrorist group ISIL?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday four RCAF fighter jets, as part of a larger coalition operation, conducted air strikes against ISIL positions in the vicinity of Mosul in northern Iraq. During this mission, our fighter jets delivered eight 500-pound bombs on an ISIL warehouse facility that was being used for manufacturing explosive devices. All eight bombs hit their targets, and they did so simultaneously. This is a testament to the skill and professionalism of our armed forces.

As always, Canada is doing its part in the fight against ISIL terrorists.

* * *

[Translation]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, by now, everyone knows that nine of the 12 CBC board members are Conservative Party backers.

How about this for a surprise? Yesterday, members of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage received notice of a new appointee: Sonja Chong, who gave the Conservatives \$1,000, will replace Peter Charbonneau, whose greatest flaw was never having given money to the Conservative Party.

How can the minister claim that CBC is independent when she keeps stacking the board with Conservative sympathizers?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, our government makes appointments using a rigorous, transparent, competency-based selection process.

Our goal is to appoint the most competent candidates for each position and to reflect Canada's linguistic and regional diversity. The government does not interfere with the democratic rights of board members. Once again, I repeat, CBC's problems are due to declining viewership and changes in the sector. We will continue to ensure that it—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, CBC clearly does not need another Conservative on its board of directors. What CBC needs is board members who care about our public broadcaster.

Quebec's intergovernmental affairs minister also sent the minister a clear reminder that Canada has recognized the importance of its founding peoples and supported their development. Cutting parliamentary appropriations is contrary to that.

Will the minister backtrack, if that is even possible, and give CBC the means to fulfill its mandate to offer local content and regional and national news in French from coast to coast? Is backtracking even possible?

Oral Questions

•(1450)

[English]

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have repeated several times in this House that the CBC receives over \$1 billion from taxpayers. In fact, their viewership has declined despite getting over \$1 billion in direct subsidies every single year from taxpayers.

Changes at the CBC are a result of both declining viewership and declining revenues. The CBC is responsible for its own choices. It is up to it to produce, both in English and French, programming that Canadians want to watch and see.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, from the time the government took power in 2006 to the end of 2013, \$1.1 billion of appropriated money from the budgets of the government has not been spent on the Department of Veterans Affairs. It sent that money back to the finance department for its future tax schemes for the wealthy in this country.

On my desk, I have the files of veterans who have been denied hearing aids and denied access to hospitals. We have an increased rate of suicide. Many veterans are now homeless. Over and over again, veterans across the country are suffering great difficulty.

The money is there in the department to be allocated for these heroes of our country, yet the minister returns that money to the finance department. My question is, why?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2006, our combined investment to veterans affairs has reached almost \$30 billion more.

What does that mean? It means improved rehabilitation for Canadian veterans. It means more counselling for veterans' families. It means more money for veterans' higher education and retraining. It means we care deeply about our veterans.

If that member and his party would vote in support of these programs, we would be far better off, as would the veterans.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the minister and the Conservative government that when the member for Outremont becomes the Prime Minister of Canada, we are going to fix these problems once and for all for the veterans of our country.

We have reservists who are treated differently from people in the regular forces and we have many RCMP members who cannot get the help they need, yet the money is there in the budget to help these men and women. The government closed veterans' offices across the country as a cost-cutting measure and returned that money back to the finance department.

The veterans of this country and their families are sick and tired of the delays in the benefits that they require. A benefit delayed is a benefit denied. When will the government allocate those funds to help the heroes of our country?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I respect deeply the concern that the hon. member across the way expresses on the issues of veterans.

However, it is totally contradictory to the last eight budgets, wherein we put in place veterans' assistance, programs, funding, and services. That party has consistently voted against that.

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*[Translation]***CBC/RADIO-CANADA**

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, 200 people gathered at the Radio-Canada Acadie office in Moncton to tell the government that enough is enough.

During the tragic events in Moncton in June, we all saw the consequences of the Conservatives' cuts when RDI and Radio-Canada did not have enough resources to support their excellent journalists in Moncton. This fall, nine more positions were cut at Radio-Canada Acadie, and that will just make matters worse.

When will the government understand that enough is enough?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers remain with the families affected by the tragedies in Moncton. Nonetheless, the changes at Radio-Canada have nothing to do with what happened that day.

As I said before, the crown corporation is attracting fewer viewers, even though it receives more than \$1 billion every year in taxpayer subsidies. The changes are directly related to that decline.

The corporation is responsible for its own decisions. It is up to the CBC to provide Canadians with programming they want in English and French.

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*[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the United States is going to meet its 2020 Copenhagen targets. The Government of Canada, however, is not going to meet its 2020 Copenhagen targets.

Last week, President Obama set new, more aggressive targets in his deal with the Chinese. If the Government of Canada cannot even meet its 2020 targets, by what means of fanciful thinking does it think that it can meet the new, more aggressive 2025 targets?

• (1455)

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world, with 79% of our electricity supply emitting no greenhouse gas emissions. We have taken action on two of the largest sources of emissions in Canada, the transportation sector and the electricity generation sector. Canada was also the first major coal user to ban the construction of traditional coal-fired generation units.

Canada's per capita greenhouse gas emissions are now at their lowest levels since we started recording them in 1990. The total emissions will go down by close to 130 megatonnes from what they would have been under the Liberals.

* * *

SENIORS

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new report from the College of Family Physicians of Canada highlights the failure of federal leadership under the Conservatives when it comes to improving care for our seniors. New Democrats believe that all seniors should be able to live in dignity and security. It is about priorities and intelligent planning, but the Conservatives have failed to act to fix gaps in home care.

Will the minister finally recognize these repeated calls and commit to implementing the NDP's proposal for a national seniors strategy?

Hon. Alice Wong (Minister of State (Seniors), CPC): Mr. Speaker, no other government has done as much for seniors as our government under the leadership of the Prime Minister. We believe in working for action. That is why we have done an action plan for seniors with 22 different departments. With that report we know that we are doing well. We have lowered taxes for seniors, increased funding for the GIS, and also encouraged healthy, active aging. That is why our seniors love us but not the NDP.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 75% of Canadians think that the federal government is not doing enough to support the provinces in the area of home care. The government is showing a lack of vision and leadership, while the need for this type of care keeps growing.

The College of Family Physicians is now calling on the federal government to develop a home care strategy. The timing is good because the NDP has a strategy ready.

Will the Conservatives support us and adopt a real strategy to ensure that our seniors have access to home care?

[English]

Hon. Alice Wong (Minister of State (Seniors), CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2007 our government created the National Seniors Council and I commend it for its hard work on matters related to the well-being and quality of life of seniors. This includes work on issues such as elder abuse, volunteering among seniors, positive and active aging, and senior participation in the workforce.

Oral Questions

This year I directed the NSC to study a new priority, the social isolation of seniors, and I look forward to their report. This is exactly what we have done for our great seniors.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, early this morning we learned of an attack against a synagogue in West Jerusalem. This cowardly act took the lives of four people and left nine injured. Attacks on innocent worshippers in what is supposed to be a place of peace and tranquillity are cowardly and must never be tolerated. Those who incite or morally support these outrages cannot evade responsibility for their role in these cowardly acts.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs please comment on today's tragic events?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and loved ones of those who came under attack. When people go to worship at a synagogue, a church, or a mosque, they expect to be able to do so in peace. We stand with the people of Israel against this barbarous attack.

However, we are tremendously concerned about the incitement and want to speak out very strongly against all the incitement, which only contributes to these types of barbaric terrorist attacks.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all the Israeli people.

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• (1500)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over 1,000 constituents of mine have launched a court action against the federal government related to abuses suffered by aboriginal students at residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. These schools were not included in the Indian residential school apology even though the abuse resulted in many of the same kinds of social and private suffering we saw in other parts of Canada.

Why is the government shirking its fiduciary duty to the aboriginal people of Labrador?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that Canada, along with many parties, has reached an agreement on a settlement with residential school victims. The people in question to which the hon. member refers were in a part of our great country that was not part of Canada at the time.

This issue is before the court, and out of respect for the court, I will not comment further.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are entering the home stretch in the negotiations for the trans-Pacific partnership. New Zealand and the United States are demanding that we abandon supply management and yet the minister is saying that everything is going well. The stability provided by supply management allows us to maintain 215,000 jobs in the dairy industry in different parts of the country.

Will the government again sacrifice dairy producers on the altar of free trade, or will it protect supply management, which is so vital for our regions?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to repeat what I said last week. My colleague and I were in Quebec City, and we met with people from the dairy and cheese industries. We told them that our government had signed 38 free trade agreements and that we had always preserved supply management and promoted it internationally.

The people who were with us, the people from the dairy and cheese industries, agree with us. They support our government, and we will continue to stand up for these people, as we have always done in the past.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Joan Crockett (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government strongly condemns the aggressive actions of Vladimir Putin and the illegal occupation of Crimea. That is exactly why we are supporting Ukraine in facing these hostilities.

We have already sent four CF-18 fighter jets. We have sent HMCS *Toronto* to NATO maritime forces, and approximately 120 CAF members to eastern Europe for training exercises.

Will the Minister of National Defence please tell us about the latest actions undertaken by the Canadian Armed Forces in Operation Reassurance?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are providing training and non-lethal equipment and supplies to the Ukrainian government as part of our contribution to NATO's Reassurance package.

I can also say that last week, two Royal Canadian Air Force CF-18s based in Lithuania intercepted and visually identified a Russian electronic warfare and surveillance aircraft. This interception clearly demonstrates the capability both of our equipment and personnel. I thank our armed forces for their efforts.

While I am on my feet, let me just say how proud I was to hear our Prime Minister tell Vladimir Putin last week, "You need to get out of Ukraine."

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the global terrorism index has recorded an almost fivefold increase in fatalities caused by terror attacks around the world. Last night, we learned that the government had failed to invest almost half of its \$129 million budgeted for strengthening the security of missions abroad.

I have a simple question. Is the government balancing its books by compromising the security of our diplomats?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my worst day as foreign minister was the day a diplomat in Nairobi who was at the Westgate shopping mall was killed in a terrorist attack.

I want to say very directly and very forcefully to the member opposite that the safety and security of our diplomats abroad is our top priority. There is absolutely no plan whatsoever to balance the budget on the backs of the security and safety of our diplomats abroad. They are a top priority.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the House is currently debating government legislation that would increase the mandate of Canada's spy agency, giving CSIS broader powers of surveillance over Canadians. However, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, suffering from two vacancies and without a full-time chair, is already falling behind in its investigations of complaints against the agency. Even former chair Chuck Strahl stated that it might be necessary to review the role of SIRC, its resources, or both.

Does the government not believe that national security should be properly balanced with effective oversight and respect for the privacy of law-abiding Canadians?

● (1505)

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the role of the Security Intelligence Review Committee is to report to Parliament and confirm that this agency is fulfilling its mandate in accordance with the law. That is precisely the purpose of Bill C-44, which we are currently debating and which will clarify the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service in order to make judges' work easier and also to facilitate the work of the review committee, which does an excellent job.

[English]

PRIVILEGE

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to provide some additional comments to those I provided in a preliminary way to the question of privilege that was raised by my former NDP counterpart, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley. It has been a while since the two of us have debated a privilege question, so I am pleased to have this opportunity.

Having reviewed, however, the hon. member's arguments and the precedents on the point, I have no hesitation in saying that there is no prima facie case of privilege here. If anything, the whole question of privilege is nothing but an attempt to deflect attention away from the excellent address that my colleague, the Minister of Finance, made last week and the news it contained, which was news about the strong state of our government's finances, the imminent elimination of the deficit and the relative success of the Canadian economy in the face of very uncertain global economic circumstances. This is news that Canadians were delighted to hear from the Minister of Finance.

However, on the question of privilege relating to that statement being delivered where it was, I would like, from the outset, to read a passage from page 444 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition. It states:

A Minister is under no obligation to make a statement in the House. The decision of a Minister to make an announcement outside the House instead of making a statement in the House during Routine Proceedings has been raised as a question of privilege, but the Chair has consistently found no grounds to support a claim that any privilege has been breached.

There are a couple of points raised by the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley which I specifically want to address.

First, the NDP finance critic argued that the economic and fiscal projections should have been presented to the House “as is custom”. Let me remind the hon. member that since the tradition of an annual economic update started a couple of decades ago, only two updates have been given here in this chamber in the House of Commons. That was back in 2000 and in 2008. No other economic fiscal updates have been delivered in this chamber.

Since the hon. member wanted to take the House down memory lane yesterday, I would like to reciprocate the gesture by reminding him of our government's effort to present the 2007 economic update in the chamber. In fact, we did try to do that. I did at the time seek to get the consent of the other parties to do so. Unfortunately though, since that required unanimous consent, it was notable that there was one party that denied consent to have the economic and fiscal update delivered on the floor of the House of Commons. If the NDP finance critic were to ask his predecessor from the time, and that is the hon. member for Outremont, ironically, he would learn that consent was actually blocked by the NDP.

There is some irony in the New Democrats' standing in the House and complaining that the economic and fiscal update was not delivered here when in the past they have been responsible for the fact that it was not delivered in this chamber when this very government sought to do exactly that.

Privilege

First, I have often remarked that “do as I say, not as I do” has been the watchword of the NDP's approach to life in the House. That is indeed the case here. In fact, I mentioned that only 2 out of the 20 economic and fiscal updates have been delivered here in the chamber. However, that number would have been higher were it not for the NDP blocking more of them from happening right here in this chamber and setting in place the tradition of it now travelling around the country to communities where people can hear about the good news from our government.

Second, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley cited a “complaint” that was raised in March 1977 to Mr. Speaker Jerome. Let me offer instead quotations from two rulings your learned predecessor gave that same month.

Ruling on a question of privilege from the then NDP leader Ed Broadbent, arguing that the Liberal transport minister should have announced a new policy in the House, Mr. Speaker Jerome said, on page 3579 of the *Debates* from March 2, 1977:

The only question is whether the minister has a discretion to choose to make statements outside or inside the House.

Not only is it clear that any minister would enjoy that discretion, in fact the language of the Standing Order says particularly that, when the procedures of the Standing Order are to be taken advantage of, a minister of the Crown may make a statement inside the House. That is the language that is used. His discretion, therefore, is not only, as always, to take whatever action he wants outside the House; the discretion even is one of an option for the minister to use the House for that purpose....

The language of the precedents is very clear. Nothing in the Standing Orders in any way interferes with the minister's discretion.

● (1510)

Later that month, on March 31, 1977, Mr. Speaker Jerome said, at page 4515 of the *Debates*, “The matter seems to have been canvassed rather thoroughly, again.” He went on to say:

—the precedents have been made clear in the past and the language of the Standing Order remains clear that a minister may make a statement in the House...

Then he went on to say:

Clearly, it is optional. So long as the Standing Order remains unchanged, the precedents remain applicable. There is no possibility of the Chair finding on a question of privilege. It would run directly counter to the interpretation of the Standing Order that has been upheld several times...

With respect to my comments yesterday that the Minister of Finance's economic update was not required by any rule of this House, in that sense it is very different from a budget in the budget debate, which is not specifically contemplated in Standing Orders, the Chair may wish to note Madam Speaker Sauvé's ruling, on August 4, 1982, at page 20017 of the *Debates*. She said:

I must remind hon. members that the members of the executive, the government, have the choice of announcing whatever they want to announce in any way they choose unless they are required under the Standing Orders to do otherwise. Of course, this particular area and this particular matter is not covered by the Standing Orders, and therefore although members might not approve of the way the minister has decided to announce...the hon. minister has the choice of his means.

Now, lest the member attempt to argue that given the economic nature of the Minister of Finance's speech, everything changes, let me be clear that it does not.

Government Orders

As I said yesterday, the Department of Finance routinely publishes a number of reports and statistics, year-round. The reports include the "Fiscal Monitor", the "Official International Reserves", the "Quarterly Finance Reports" and, occasionally, private sector forecasts received, to name a few. None of these is the subject of speeches delivered in the House by the Minister of Finance. I am sure, in view of the good news they would usually contain, the NDP would undoubtedly, as it did in 2007, refuse necessary consent for an address of that type.

Following a speech given outside of the House by the former finance minister, Paul Martin, a speech that talked about Canada's financial circumstances and the state of the surplus, Deputy Speaker Peter Milliken, as he then was, opened his September 20, 2000, ruling, at page 8414 of the *Debates*, with these words. He said:

The Chair has listened to the arguments advanced by the hon. members on this point. I have to say that when this particular chair occupant was in opposition I raised the same point. I am familiar with the argument but I am also familiar, unfortunately, with Speakers' rulings on this point, so I have some bad news for the members who raised this issue.

Mr. Milliken's comments echoed those of Mr. Speaker Jerome, at page 2792 of the *Debates*, on February 1, 1979. He said:

The hon. member for St. John's West, (Mr. Crosbie), raises a familiar question of privilege related to the action of ministers making statements elsewhere. I say it is familiar, because it is as old as the history of parliament.

The question of privilege from the NDP finance critic is just, as I said, an effort by the NDP to distract from the following key facts: that our government's latest tax cuts and benefits represent close to \$27 billion back in the pockets of families over this year and the next five years. In fact, we had a vote in the House on a ways and means motion on just that question. Of course, the NDP and the Liberals opposed those measures.

It is also an effort to detract from the fact that every Canadian family with children under the age of 18 will have more money in their pockets because of these tax reductions and benefits and, of course, the good news that the overall federal tax burden is now at its lowest level in over half a century.

These are certainly things the NDP does not want Canadians to know. That is why they do not want the Minister of Finance talking about it anywhere outside Ottawa, anywhere out where Canadians are doing their normal business, anywhere where Canadians are trying to work hard and make ends meet and appreciate the help that our government is delivering to them.

It is disappointing to see the NDP members disguising that effort to distract behind this bogus question of privilege, which is steeped in the irony of the fact that it is only the NDP that has ever refused the consent necessary to have these kinds of statements delivered in the House and now complain that they are not always delivered in the House.

It is quite clear to me, Mr. Speaker, that no prima facie case of privilege can be found in this case. The facts do not support it, history does not support it and certainly any consistency of behaviour from the NDP does not support it.

• (1515)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when the government House leader made his

intervention, I was tempted to stand and impart to you the rule of eloquence. What he said yesterday was not relevant at all to the very eloquent question of privilege that was raised by the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Today, there is a little more relevance. Much of his talking points seem to be conceived in the Prime Minister's Office, but nowhere in his statement is there any justification in the Standing Orders for hard-working Canadians having to fork over \$800 a pop to go listen to the Minister of Finance deliver the fall economic update. Certainly, there is nothing in the Standing Orders that actually allows for that.

Therefore, we have a number of comments from the government House leader, more relevant today than they were yesterday. I would like to come back at some point in today's session, which I know will be a prolonged session, to respond, if we choose to, on a number of the points that were raised today.

The Speaker: I note the interventions by both members. I look forward to any future ones that may be presented, and will rule in due course.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PROTECTION OF CANADA FROM TERRORISTS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, An Act to amend the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act. Countering terrorism is a key priority of our Conservative government. Events in the Middle East, including the ongoing conflict in Syria and Iraq, as well as the recent tragic events on Canadian soil, have raised the spectre of violent extremism.

These events have only strengthened our resolve as we have heard our law enforcement and intelligence officials speak about the threat posed by extremist travellers and indeed as we have witnessed some very disturbing attacks on our soldiers and on the House.

Our government will do anything we can to prevent Canadians from becoming either victims or perpetrators of terrorism-related activities. Make no mistake, the horrific events that happened in Canada on October 20 and 22 were most certainly terrorism. While the leader of the NDP is entitled to his own opinions, he is not entitled to his own facts.

Government Orders

The Criminal Code clearly states that a terrorist act is one of violence, seeking to create fear for political, religious or ideological ends. The RCMP confirms that both of these events had those elements, and our allies agree. Just yesterday, the President of France confirmed his country's position, as recently did the U.S. Secretary of State that these were terrorist acts.

We continue to be guided by the four-pronged approach laid out in our counterterrorism strategy, namely measures to prevent, detect, deny and respond to the threat of terrorism. I will take my time today to speak about some of the important work being done in support of our strategy, namely in the area of prevention and detection.

In terms of the prevent element, I would note that Public Safety Canada is the lead federal department for addressing the issue of violent extremism and it does so in close collaboration with a number of departments and agencies, in particular, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. An important way to address violent extremism is by preventing it from happening in the first place. Our work to counter violent extremism is predicated on three complementary elements: building community capacity; building law enforcement awareness through training; and developing programs to stop radicalization to violence through early intervention.

There are a number of specific initiatives I could point to here, including in-depth dialogue with communities on radicalization to violence, but I want to emphasize the importance of the work being done under the Kanishka project contribution program.

Named in memory of the victims of Air India Flight 182, our government committed \$10 million over five years in support of valuable academic research to help inform our understanding of what we could do to stop terrorism.

Research supported by the project will increase our knowledge of the recruitment methods and tactics of terrorists, which will help produce more effective policies, tools and resources for law enforcement and people on the front lines.

In terms of the detect element, I first want to note that we have had some noteworthy successes in disrupting terrorist plots in our country. Successful arrests, prosecutions and convictions in Canada are a testament to the fact that our national security agencies work effectively with partners and communities. However, to be clear, more needs to be done in the areas of surveillance, detention and arrest.

The events of late October this year offered a stark reminder that the status quo simply is unacceptable. Sadly, we had to lose two brave members of the Canadian Armed Forces to have the point hit home that while we must not overreact to the terrorist threat, we certainly must stop under reacting

That is why work to improve our capabilities in support of detection is an area in which the Government of Canada is active. That is, in fact, why we are here today to debate the first step forward.

The Prime Minister has been clear about the need to ensure our security and intelligence community have the tools they need to confront the terrorist threat.

As members may be aware, the legislation before us today contains provisions to update the governing legislation of CSIS, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. There is no question the threats to Canada's security have changed dramatically since the passage of the CSIS Act in 1984. For context, this legislation has not been updated since the first Apple Macintosh was sold.

Given that the threat from terrorism is now more complex and diffuse, this legislation would go a long way toward giving CSIS the clarity it would need to investigate threats to the security of Canada wherever they may occur.

• (1520)

To that end, the proposed legislation contains amendments that would confirm CSIS' authority to investigate threats outside of Canada.

CSIS has always had authority to conduct investigations outside of Canada, because threats to the security of Canada do not stop at our border. However the CSIS Act needs to be clearer in stating this fact. Confirming CSIS' authority would ensure that CSIS has the ability to fully investigate the threat posed by Canadians who travel abroad to engage in terrorist activities. This would help ensure that those individuals would be tracked, investigated, and ultimately prosecuted.

Bill C-44 also contains amendments to help CSIS protect the identity of its human sources in court proceedings, as well as its employees who are likely to engage in covert operational activities in the future.

While we debate Bill C-44, I would like to draw to members' attention a few other important pieces of legislation that only further demonstrate our government's resolve to combatting terrorism.

The Combating Terrorism Act, which came into force in May 2013, makes leaving or attempting to leave Canada for terrorist purposes a criminal offence. Unfortunately, the NDP voted against this common-sense legislation.

Another important tool that we continue to use is the listing of terrorist entities under the Criminal Code. Once a terrorist group is listed as an entity, it becomes a criminal offence for any Canadian to provide financial assistance to the group or to enhance its ability to carry out terrorist activity.

In light of ongoing events in Iraq, the Government of Canada listed ISIL, for example, as a terrorist entity. The listing of terrorist entities facilitates prosecution of both the perpetrators and supporters of terrorism. Given the fact that these groups require money to function, listing is also advantageous in countering terrorist financing.

It is also important to note that Canada works closely with its international allies to confront the terrorist threat. Clearly, the challenges Canada continues to face with respect to terrorism are ones our allies also face, so collaboration with our partners will be key to our counter-terrorism efforts.

Government Orders

In conclusion, I want to assure all Canadians that our government is, as ever, committed to ensuring the safety and security of Canadians at home and abroad. That is what Bill C-44 is all about. I call on all members to support it.

• (1525)

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for my friend across the way, when the government was considering Bill C-44, did it take into consideration the recommendations of Justice O'Connor from the Maher Arar commission and Justice Iacobucci from the investigation into the torture of Abdullah Almalki?

Both of those reports were very significant and very important to Canadians, especially in the area of oversight of Canadian civil rights.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Mr. Speaker, of course that report was considered. All of the intelligence we have gained over the years and the developments in terrorist activities we have seen in Canada and around the world have led to the formation of this bill.

One of the important conclusions that came from that report and others is the need for clarity, in terms of the role of CSIS and the role of the Federal Court in providing oversight. It is that lack of clarity that can lead to problems; hence the need for Bill C-44. It would give CSIS and other intelligence services a clearer mandate in exactly what their roles and responsibilities are, clearer protection for witnesses and informants, and also a clearer definition of the role of the Federal Court, as well as the oversight bodies, to make sure that these kinds of injustices do not occur in the future.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member said that part of the bill would confirm the authority of CSIS as it has been operating, and that is true. We support that.

However in response to the last question, he talked a little about oversight. There are two issues here. One is the proper financial resources for CSIS and others it is connected to under the responsibility of the government to do its job.

We now know that CSIS has lapsed \$18.2 million last year. The RCMP has lapsed \$158.6 million. Canada Border Services Agency has lapsed \$194.2 million. These are monies that were allocated to them and not used. That is a problem, and we had better put our finger on it.

On the oversight the member mentioned, why did the government not seize this opportunity to provide proper parliamentary oversight to all our national security agencies when it brought in this bill? All our Five Eyes partners have parliamentary oversight, and that is something Justice O'Connor looked at as well. Why did the government miss that opportunity to give this House the ability to take its responsibility to provide oversight to those national security agencies?

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Mr. Speaker, there were two questions there. I will talk about the second question first, and then I will try to address the first question.

To the second question on oversight, there actually is very good oversight right now, and multiple levels of oversight. Very independent judges provide that oversight. I would also note that the Liberal Party did nothing to change the oversight of CSIS during

its tenure of 13 years in a majority government. Having said that, it actually works quite well. The federal judge who oversees the oversight board has commented that Canadian laws are respected in all of the activities of CSIS.

With respect to the funding of CSIS and making sure Canadians are protected from acts of terrorism, we are getting into the business of appropriations and supply, and lapses of project-based spending. The Government of Canada is committed to investing in our security capabilities. This House should rest assured that we will spend the money necessary to protect Canadians from terrorist activities.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I would hate for there to be wrong information on the record. The Liberals did, in fact, introduce a bill in 2005 for oversight.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place on behalf of the good people of Davenport in the great city of Toronto.

The people in my community are watching this debate very carefully. I think it is fair to say that Canadians from coast to coast to coast are watching this debate carefully because we are in an era where we have a government that believes we can treat our civil liberties as a secondary thought to security. The position of New Democrats has always been that we must treat both in equal measure and be as vigilant in protecting civil liberties as we are in protecting security. It is not a question of balance; it is a question of what our values are as Canadians and who we believe we are. These values, which are the foundation of a liberal democracy, are what we are trying to protect and secure. We cannot trade them away in that pursuit.

The NDP's questions around some of the issues in this bill are around oversight, and the questions on oversight exist because we believe there is not a trade-off. This is not an either/or situation. It is not that we have to find a balance, that in order get security right, we may have to clamp down a bit on civil liberties. We do not believe that is the case, and Canadians share those concerns.

I want to focus on a couple of elements of the bill, which are concerns for the community I represent. This flows from other decisions that the government has made around the creation, in a way, of two-tiered citizenship in Canada, where people in Canada could be stripped of their citizenship. The government often says that the NDP is soft on these issues, but in fact, when people break laws in this country, they should go to jail. If they are citizens of Canada, they should go to jail.

Government Orders

I am proud to represent a riding in the west end of Toronto that has huge communities of immigrants. More than half of those who live in Toronto were born elsewhere. They take their belonging to Canada very seriously and are very proud of it. The notion is of grave concern that down the road their status in Canada, through no fault of their own, could be somehow diminished or lessened by legislation and the direction of the government. I hear it in my office; I hear it out on the street; I talk to people all the time who are really very concerned about the government. I am talking about immigrants in Toronto who are very concerned about the government's fixation on picking off certain communities and creating a climate of concern and fear. Quite frankly, it is our role as parliamentarians to elevate the debate, bring out the best in who we are, and bring people together.

The changes to the Canadian Citizenship Act in Bill C-44 would not really provide any major changes, other than accelerating the timelines for citizenship revocation for dual citizens involved in terrorist activities, the process for citizenship revocation that we debated in the House and I am proud that my party opposed. They remain unchanged; it is just the speed with which this can be achieved.

• (1530)

Our citizenship is a precious thing. We have laws in our country to deal with those in our society who break them. Our position has always been that our tinkering with citizenship is a slippery slope, and it is not what we should be doing, especially given the history of our country, the history of immigration in this country, and the successful history of our immigrant communities in Canada. We have a phenomenal story to tell. Our immigrant communities have a phenomenal story to tell.

In light of recent events, the Muslim community in particular in my riding is concerned about being targeted. It is a disturbing reflex of the Conservative government to try to place responsibility for individuals on a whole community. The concern in the Muslim community I represent is real. These are hard-working, honest, proud Canadians, and they abhor violence, just like anyone else in Canadian society. What we are talking about today connects to that concern. It is spoken about in a number of supporting documents, which I would like to underline.

I want to particularly point out comments made by former Justices O'Connor, Major, and Iacobucci at the October 29, 2014 conference called "Arar +10: National Security and Human Rights a Decade Later":

Retired Supreme Court justice Frank Iacobucci, who investigated the overseas detentions and torture of three Muslim Canadians...warned that history has much to teach legislators....

Iacobucci cautioned about "the spillover effects" that any rush to expand police powers could have on freedom of religion, association and expression; the possible "tainting" of Canada's Muslim community, and the risk of "overreaching" by security intelligence agencies when sharing information in a global fight against terrorism.

It is important for us to bring the issue of what Justice Iacobucci refers to as tainting Canada's Muslim community close to home.

A couple of days after the shooting that took place here, I visited the mosque in my riding. As members may remember, Torontonians were in the middle of a municipal election in Toronto, and Muslim

candidates in that election had signs vandalized that day. Muslim candidates were facing threats at public meetings.

It is incumbent upon us as legislators here in the Parliament of Canada to ensure that all Canadians, all people living in Canada, feel safe and feel that their civil liberties are protected and are as important as every other consideration in security.

• (1535)

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that this is my second time rising. In regard to my question for the government a few minutes ago about Justice O'Connor and the recommendations from the Maher Arar inquiry and the recommendations by Justice Iacobucci relative to the Abdullah Almalki case, I would like to ask my friend if, when he reviewed Bill C-44, he saw in the information we have before us any indication that the government followed any of those recommendations. I do not see it.

• (1540)

Mr. Andrew Cash: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very important work on issues of human rights and civil liberties.

Indeed, I have not heard the government speak once about the importance, if we expand the scope of CSIS, of expanding its oversight. This is a very clear gap in this legislation. It is one we will need to close. I believe that we will be advocating quite strongly for that if this bill goes to committee.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any question that this bill should go to committee. In fact, I am on that committee.

The member said he would like to see some amendments. We are not very successful in this Parliament, with government legislation, in having the government actually listen to sensible positions from opposition parties of any stripe. I would give the member the opportunity to talk a little bit about what needs to be done and to maybe explain why it is necessary that the government see this as an opportunity to accept an amendment or two and actually improve the legislation.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Mr. Speaker, the issue of civilian oversight of CSIS and our security apparatus is crucial here. Again, it is fundamental to the protection of civil liberties and to the foundation of a liberal democracy to have that civilian oversight. This is not just the opposition speaking. Privacy commissioners across Canada and senior members of the Canadian legal establishment have said the same thing.

We have seen this government steamroll through legislation and in a very determined way not listen to any advice from the opposition. I really hope, especially in light of the tragic events of the last month, that the government does not use those events and the feelings and concern they have created among Canadians to make some serious mistakes with this bill. We will all be working very hard in committee to ensure that this does not happen.

Government Orders

I hope the government proceeds in the spirit of doing what we need to do to preserve, nurture, and enrich civil liberties while maintaining a rigorous security understanding of what we need here in Canada.

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to this important legislation. Bill C-44 is a bill I am proud to support, because it introduces much-needed amendments that will help keep Canadians safe and secure from terrorists. Before highlighting the proposed changes, I would like to have a few moments to situate the bill in a larger context.

Earlier this year, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness released the “2014 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada”. The report updates Canadians on the terrorist threat in, unfortunately, a sobering way.

In 2013, Canada listed six groups as terrorist entities. There have been four more added so far in 2014, which means that there are currently 53 groups on Canada's terrorist entity list. If I may, I would like to give members one example of a group that was listed in December 2013 and explain why it is a dangerous group.

The Nigerian-based Boko Haram is a group that believes that western education is sinful. Six months ago, it kidnapped some 200 girls from a remote school. Earlier this month, in what can only be described as a toxic and hate-filled video, the leader of Boko Haram put the release of these girls in serious doubt. Horrifically, the leadership of this despicable terrorist organization has talked openly about how these kidnapped girls have been sold off as chattel and given away as sexual objects.

Whether terrorist acts are carried out by entities or individuals, the number of incidents is staggering. In 2013, more than 9,700 terrorist incidents were reported in 93 countries. Some 33,000 people were injured, and nearly 3,000 were abducted or held hostage.

Canadians are at risk. When al Shabaab attacked the Westgate mall in Nairobi last year, they killed 68 people. Among the dead were a Canadian businessman and an employee of the Government of Canada. Through no fault of their own, those two Canadians were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Unfortunately, in our globalized world, where Canadians travel frequently for pleasure and business, it is easier than ever for this to occur.

More disturbing still, the impact of terror on Canadians is not always a matter of coincidence. As the report makes clear, Canadians are not only the victims of terrorism. Unfortunately, in some cases, there are those in Canada who are also the perpetrators.

Members may recall that in the spring of 2013, two men living in Toronto and Montreal were charged with plotting to attack a VIA Rail passenger train. Through the diligence of our security agencies, the attack was thwarted before any damage was done. However, the incident could easily have been a tragedy. A few months later, in Victoria, two other individuals were arrested in connection with a separate plot to bomb the provincial legislature on Canada Day. Thanks to collaboration between intelligence and law enforcement officers, the attack was foiled. Again, this incident could easily have turned out much worse.

I hope these two incidents were a wake-up call to the sceptics. They reaffirmed that the threat of terrorism is not limited to far-flung

lands across the ocean. No, these despicable acts could also take place right here on our own soil.

I spoke a moment ago about globalization and how the terrorist threat to Canada continues to evolve, but as the report makes clear, there is also a group of Canadians who travel for the sole purpose of engaging in terrorist activities. They are known by various names: extremist travellers, foreign fighters, or terror tourists. It is a complex phenomenon, but there is one thing that is clear: these extremists pose a threat to innocent people, both here at home and abroad.

● (1545)

Let us look more closely at this emerging trend, because it is closely related to the proposed amendments contained in Bill C-44.

The government knows of approximately 145 individuals with Canadian connections who were abroad and who were suspected of supporting terrorism-related activities of various groups. These activities range from serving in combat to learning how to support terrorism through fundraising, propaganda, and training. Some of these recruits may return home with new skills to spread hatred and, unfortunately, with the resolve to plan and carry out terrorist attacks here in Canada.

What sends a person down the dark road to terrorism? What happens to make someone adopt such extremist views? How can we manage the risks of radicalization more effectively?

These are difficult questions, and they have no simple answers. Nevertheless, our government is taking action to answer these and other difficult questions. In this way, we continue to build resilience to the threat of terrorism in our country, and I will give members several examples.

At the community level, we work through the Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security to better understand how to combat the appeal of extremist ideologies.

On the policy level, the government released its counterterrorism strategy in 2012. This is a comprehensive road map to help us better prevent, detect, deny, and respond to terrorist threats. On the legislative side, Parliament enacted legislation in 2013 that created four new offences to deter so-called extremist travellers. These are all necessary and positive steps, but we must do more.

This brings me, of course, to Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act.

There are two components of the proposed legislation.

First, the bill before us would amend the CSIS Act to address court decisions that are having an impact on CSIS's mandate and operations. In light of these decisions, our government is acting to ensure that CSIS has the tools it needs to investigate threats to the security of Canada. It is doing this by confirming the authorities granted to CSIS outside of Canada and creating stronger protection for the identities of CSIS's human sources. The amendments proposed in Bill C-44 would ensure that CSIS is able to fully investigate threats in a manner that is consistent with the rule of law and with Canadian law and Canadian values.

Government Orders

The second element of the bill would amend the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, which received royal assent this past summer. Specifically, it would expand grounds for revocation of Canadian citizenship and streamline the process for making these difficult decisions. These provisions are aimed at dual citizens who have served as members of an armed force or an organized armed group engaged in armed conflict with Canada. They also target dual citizens who have been convicted of terrorism, high treason, treason, or spying offences, depending, of course, on the sentence imposed.

The events of recent weeks have certainly brought into sharp focus the fact that Canada is not immune to acts of violence. In fact, we have learned it is far from that. Canadians have been victims of terrorism, and a small but unfortunately notable number are also suspected of supporting terrorism-related activities. We must ensure that our security and intelligence agencies can take reasonable measures at home and abroad to protect the safety and security of Canadians.

The bill before the House today would move us closer toward these goals, and I urge all hon. members to join me in supporting it.

• (1550)

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the way talked about the need to deflect radicalization. As my colleague, the member for Davenport, mentioned earlier, one of the biggest issues for all immigrants is a sense of inclusion in their adopted land. These individuals are vulnerable because they feel a lack of inclusion.

How can the changes to passports or citizenship make individuals feel as if they belong when there will be this perpetual cloud hanging over them because they are “not from here”? I wonder how that would help create a sense of inclusion and how that would help with the non-radicalization of new arrivals in Canada.

• (1555)

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question, but I think he should have taken more note of the remarks I made.

There are two aspects, I believe, to trying to prevent these kinds of acts. Our government has undertaken initiatives to prevent these kinds of instances by trying to ensure that people have the resources necessary. There are programs out there to try to discourage people from becoming radicalized. There certainly have been many efforts in that regard, and I think that issue is what he speaks to.

However, if and when people do involve themselves in these kinds of activities, we have to ensure that we do everything we can to protect Canadians from those kinds of individuals and groups that seek to do them harm.

Unfortunately, I think this is where the NDP really lacks and fails in terms of its ideology. It does not seem to share our thought as a government that it is important to ensure that Canadians are protected from those kinds of individuals.

We even heard it from his leader. His leader denied that these attacks on Canada were acts of terror. Frankly, we all know that they were, in fact, acts of terror. We must do everything we can to protect Canadians and we certainly hope that the NDP will finally get on board and join us in those attempts to protect Canadians.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for Wild Rose's remarks. I believe he exaggerates a bit on what the bill would do, because even CSIS itself admits that the bill would really just confirm in law what CSIS is already doing and, hopefully, satisfy the court on it.

However, I have a concern over what the government and CSIS are not doing. They already have the authority, under the Criminal Code, to arrest. In fact, the minister himself said before a committee that these Canadians who have been involved in terrorist acts abroad have broken Canadian law, and the director of CSIS said, that very same day, that CSIS knows where they are.

The government has the authority under the Criminal Code to arrest them, under, I believe, section 83, but it has not used it. I have to ask why not. That is one thing that could be done that it is not doing.

The other point I want to make is that I am pleased the member has shown an interest in finding the root causes of homegrown terrorism. We need to look at that.

I put a bill before the public safety committee to ask the committee to do a study on finding out the cause of these individuals getting into homegrown terrorism in Canada. The bill went into committee and never came out, so I guess the member can figure out what happened.

Does he not think that this Parliament has the responsibility, through its committee system, to do that kind of work, to do that kind of study, and look at the root causes of homegrown terrorism in this country?

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member ask a question of the previous government member who spoke, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, about funding. I want to be very clear that our government has in fact increased funding to CSIS and the RCMP by over one-third. In fact, our government has provided \$700 million more than what was provided in the last year the Liberals were in power, so there was certainly a failing on their part.

The bill is another step in the right direction. Is there more we can do? Certainly. I know that the government has committed to doing what needs to be done to ensure we protect Canadians and keep them safe.

I hope the member will join us in those efforts.

• (1600)

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to represent the citizens of Surrey North and to speak on their behalf on this particular bill, Bill C-44, which makes some amendments to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act.

Basically, this bill would broaden the powers of our intelligence agencies, CSIS and others, so that they have additional powers to carry out their work.

Government Orders

Defending public safety and civil liberties are key responsibilities of any government. I hope the Conservative government will take these responsibilities seriously when it comes to Canadians' safety and, equally, will carefully examine the civil liberties we have as Canadians.

Moving forward, we must do the hard work of ensuring Canadians' safety while guarding our values of freedom, tolerance, and inclusive democracy. As parliamentarians, as elected officials from our communities, we also have an equal responsibility to carefully review laws, security procedures, and legislation to make sure that we get them right the first time.

However, we have seen the government rush things through a number of times. This particular bill is under time allocation, and I will talk about that in a second.

The government tries to rush these things through, but as representatives of Canadian citizens, we have a responsibility to ensure that we go through any legislation that passes through this House with a fine-toothed comb. We are going to make sure the work is done responsibly and that there is careful study and evidence-based decision-making.

My friends across the aisle do not like to make evidence-based policy. We have seen that over and over. It is not only that a number of court cases and legislation have been thrown out by the Supreme Court, but sometimes the government picks numbers out of the air. We have seen the census eliminated by the government because it does not believe in actual numbers that will show Canadians what is happening.

The Minister of Employment and Social Development and his department have used numbers from Kijiji. For those who may not be familiar with Kijiji, it is—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Langley is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I am listening carefully to the member across the way. We are neighbours, but it is important to have relevance. We are dealing with the protection of Canada from terrorists act, not with what he is talking about, so I would ask that he make his comments relevant.

The Deputy Speaker: I have some difficulty with that. I can see the connection. It is a bit of a stretch, and I will recognize that, but there is a connection between the security he is referring to and the bill that is before the House.

I will give him some more leeway and ask him to try to rein it in a bit tighter.

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, I am mentioning this because this is a critical piece of legislation that deals with Canadian civil liberties and also deals with Canadians' safety.

I am asking Parliament to consider fact-based, evidence-based arguments to ensure that we go through this legislation, Bill C-44, with a fine-toothed comb, to ensure that we as parliamentarians take our responsibilities seriously, to ensure that the legislation we pass is protecting not only Canadians but also civil liberties. It is fair to lay out the record of what the government has done in the past and, absolutely, what I am talking about is related to this bill.

Let us talk about what has been lacking when we think about giving broad powers to intelligence and security agencies, but equally Canadians expect us to look at the other side, the oversight of these agencies, how much power they have, and whether we have a civilian and parliamentary oversight of these agencies.

Let us take a look at CSIS. The oversight for CSIS is being provided by SIRC, which is a part-time committee not made up of parliamentarians, but the current chair is a former member of the Reform Party, which was the Conservative Party. It has an additional two members. Two of the seats are vacant. Those are the facts of what the committee is made up of today.

Not only that, but the inspector general, which was an internal position that used to look at the activities of CSIS, was eliminated by the Conservative government. Therefore, when we give more powers to these agencies, Canadians expect us to ensure that there is proper oversight. The oversight of CSIS is already lacking. The NDP has been calling for more civilian oversight of these agencies, yet the Conservatives have stonewalled on this issue many times. This is one of things that Canadians expect us to debate in the House to ensure not only their safety but equally the civil liberties component.

In the Maher Arar inquiry there were a number of recommendations brought forward by the committee for the government to implement an oversight of these civilian organizations, yet we have seen over a period of time that basically the Conservatives have failed to deliver on those recommendations that Canadians expect us to implement to make sure that not only do we have these agencies protecting us but there is also some sort of oversight to ensure that they are within the law and ensuring Canadians' safety in a manner that is expected of them.

There are many concerns with the bill, one of which I have just talked about. The Conservatives could have brought in better oversight, especially when bringing in additional powers. It is equally important that we have oversight to make sure the work is being done properly.

The other aspect of the intelligence and security apparatus is that we have seen unspent money in the last three years. Not only that, but we have seen budgets being cut for these intelligence agencies that are supposed to be protecting Canadians. We have seen budget cuts under the current government. Conservatives pretend they are concerned about the safety of Canadians, yet when it comes to actually delivering resources for these agencies, they have failed to do that.

● (1605)

I am talking about millions of dollars to ensure that security agencies have the proper tools to protect Canadians, which have been cut.

I will quote some of the validators for the particular position that New Democrats are taking with regard to oversight. The privacy and information commissioners of Canada, while attending their annual meeting, noted the events in Quebec and Ottawa, and stated:

We acknowledge that security is essential to maintaining our democratic rights. At the same time, the response to such events must be measured and proportionate, and crafted so as to preserve our democratic values.

Government Orders

To sum up, Conservatives want to give additional powers to CSIS and other security intelligence agencies, and Canadians expect us to equally protect their civil liberties. Previously the Liberals and now the Conservatives have failed to deliver on that.

• (1610)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this came before the standing committee and the member said it was rushed through, which I do not believe is accurate.

He said he has concerns about changes to the census, about oversight, and regarding the Maher Arar commission. Were these issues that he or his colleagues brought up at the standing committee when this was thoroughly debated and sent back to the House?

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, of course this is being rushed through. The government just moved time allocation on this bill this morning. I am glad the member has given me the opportunity to explain to Canadians what time allocation is. It is basically shutting down the debate. There are many members on this side of the House, as well as on the Conservative side of the House, who will not have the opportunity to represent their citizens. This is one aspect of it. When we look at the recommendations that were made by the Maher Arar commission, none of them have been implemented by the current government over the last eight or nine years.

We have been screaming and yelling on this side of the House and were nudging the Conservatives in committee to ensure that there is proper civilian oversight of the intelligence agencies, and the Conservatives have failed on that.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would put on the record that there are really no additional powers for CSIS in the bill that it does not already have. The bill responds to some court decisions and would allow CSIS to do legally what it has already been doing.

The member mentioned oversight, and he seems to be talking about civilian oversight. There already is SIRC, which is an after-the-fact oversight agency. I will admit that it is difficult for the government to find a balance between national security and civil liberties, but we have to find it and assure Canadians. I will ask for the member's comment on this. Would it not be better to have parliamentary oversight through a proper parliamentary oversight committee of all our national security agencies, as all our Five Eyes partners do? Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and the U.K. all have oversight.

There is a private member's bill, Bill C-551, before Parliament that would do that and on which there was all-party agreement. Mr. Speaker, you were on the committee, as was the Minister of Justice and the current Minister of State for Finance, where there was all-party agreement on parliamentary oversight. Would the member for Surrey North not see that as a good possibility?

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the wonderful question from the member for Malpeque. I have had the chance to work with him on the public safety committee.

One thing is very clear. What we currently have is not independent. It is not civilian oversight. It is a committee that is appointed. It is a part-time committee. Not only that, but we only have three members when we should have five. In addition, the head

of this interim or part-time committee is actually a former member of Parliament from the Reform Party.

What Canadians expect us to do is come together as a multi-party committee to ensure that we have proper oversight of these intelligence agencies, to ensure that the course they are following does not infringe on Canadians' rights and civil liberties, and to ensure that somebody is watching over them.

• (1615)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to rise to speak to Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorism act.

It is important to begin this debate by acknowledging that all activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service are conducted in accordance with Canadian law. CSIS activities are also subject to full and complete review by the Security and Intelligence Review Committee, CSIS' dedicated review body. This seems to be something that my colleagues opposite are quite concerned about. They seem to think that we are in the movies where spies wantonly disregard our laws in order to put a stop to whatever threat may exist. While our security agencies do phenomenal work every day to keep us safe, it is not the content of a James Bond movie. Employees of CSIS follow the law, and that has constantly been found to be the case by the oversight bodies.

Let me put it quite simply for my friends across the way. This legislation would not change any of the robust review mechanisms that are currently in place. CSIS will continue to be subject to review and require judicial authorization for certain intrusive activities. CSIS will also continue to be accountable to its minister and to this Parliament. I say accountable to Parliament very deliberately. The director of CSIS, the commissioner of the RCMP, and the Minister of Public Safety recently appeared before a parliamentary committee for a frank and open discussion about the terrorist threat to Canada.

While some may call for these roles to be formalized and more bureaucracy to be created, we will continue to live by the old adage "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

This legislation would clarify elements of CSIS' mandate and address serious operational gaps, particularly for CSIS' international activities, by confirming its authority to operate abroad; clarify that the court can issue warrants for CSIS' international activities in consideration of relevant Canadian law; prohibit the disclosure of the identity of CSIS human sources, with narrow exceptions; and finally, protect the identity of the CSIS employees who are likely to be engaged in covert activities. These amendments to the CSIS Act are vital to address threats to the security of Canada.

For the sake of debate, I will focus my remarks on the aspect of this legislation that prohibits the disclosure of CSIS human sources. However, before doing that I would like to provide some historical and organizational context for this debate.

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Like our allies, intelligence is collected in Canada through a range of sources, including open source research, signals intelligence, foreign reporting, authorized intercepts, and, important for us here today, human sources.

Human intelligence includes, but is not limited to, information provided to CSIS by individuals acting covertly and in confidence as human sources. All forms of intelligence collected are vital to Canada's national security interests. CSIS has its own distinct mandate and corresponding review and authorization regimes that reflect the nature of its investigative activities.

CSIS' mandate is clearly defined in law. The CSIS Act authorizes it to collect and analyze intelligence to the extent that is strictly necessary and to provide advice on threats to the security of Canada. CSIS must be able to conduct investigations within and outside of Canada in order to fulfill that mandate.

CSIS' role in Canada's national security community is to investigate threat-related activity and to advise the Government of Canada's partners so that decisions may be taken on the basis of all information available. This role is specifically provided for by Parliament. In this manner, CSIS intelligence, which by its very nature must remain secret, may inform decisions related to entry into Canada, immigration status, government security clearances, aviation security, and criminal investigations, just to name a few.

• (1620)

CSIS' human-source-based intelligence collection is a fundamental component of its investigations. One could question whether CSIS would even continue to be an intelligence agency without information from its human sources. CSIS human sources regularly provide CSIS with valuable information on threats to national security and, like any modern intelligence agency, the identities of these CSIS human sources are closely guarded secrets to protect their ongoing access to relevant information and, most importantly, to protect their personal safety.

When these sources share information with CSIS, they often do so at great risk to both themselves and their families, and do so out of a desire to keep Canada safe. These individuals should be lauded for their sense of duty to Canada and our way of life. I challenge members in the House to imagine what would befall these persons divulging information on the activities of such nefarious individuals should they be found out. Undoubtedly, such individuals would be viewed as traitors for sharing information with CSIS. Needless to say, the physical safety of CSIS sources is at risk should their status as informants become known. To ensure the safety and security of these CSIS human sources, it is essential that their identities remain confidential and that the government be able to provide a degree of certainty to secure their co-operation.

In that regard, the Supreme Court recently ruled that CSIS human sources do not benefit from a class privilege as police informants do. This means there is currently no guarantee that a human source's identity will be protected from disclosure in legal proceedings; therefore, there is the need for change. At the same time, the court acknowledged that the practice of putting CSIS sources before the courts, even in closed proceedings, could have a chilling effect on the willingness of citizens to come forward. Failing to protect the identity of CSIS human sources could undermine existing human-

source operations, weakening the very foundation of CSIS' investigative tradecraft. That is why I support adding human-source protection amendments to the CSIS Act, and I hope others do too.

Without clarity on such measures, CSIS risks seeing its sources compromised, together with the investigations connected to them. We should be clear, however, that the proposed amendments were drafted to comply with the principles of fundamental justice and as such provide for narrow exceptions to this prohibition. At the order of a judge, the identity of a human source could be disclosed if that information were critical to prove the innocence of the accused at the criminal trial or, were the judge to determine that the individual was not a human source or that the information could not be revealed through a source's identity. That creates the balance that we are concerned about. While such provisions would likely be used infrequently, they balance the need for human-source-identity protection and the right of the accused to a fair trial.

Modern intelligence collection draws on a variety of sources, including open-source research, interviews, information from domestic and international partners, and warranted intercepts. However, the voluntary and confidential reporting of human sources remains the cornerstone of CSIS investigations. The complex terrorist threat that Canada faces, including events abroad and those here at home, demands careful consideration of all tools at our government's disposal to protect the safety and security of Canadians and our way of life. Protecting the identities of individuals who put their lives in jeopardy to assist our Security Intelligence Agency in this effort is a very important element in this response. That is why I call on all hon. members to support the important legislation of Bill C-44 before us today.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, NDP): Mr. Speakers, as members can see, we feel that this bill certainly does need to go to committee so that required changes to it can be discussed. On this side of the House, I do not think we feel that we should not be strengthening legislation when it comes to terrorism. However, at the same time, we have heard members on the other side talk about resources. They can put every legislative change under the sun in place, but if they do not provide the proper resources these are never going to be effective.

When I look at the appropriate resources section, it is important to note that the Conservatives actually cut funding for our public safety agencies for three straight years. There will be a total of \$687.9 million in cuts by 2015. CSIS itself will be subject to ongoing cuts of \$24.5 million by 2015, while Budget 2012 scrapped the CSIS position of inspector general altogether.

With that in mind, how can government members think we could take them seriously when they are cutting the very resources that need to be in place to protect Canadians?

Government Orders

•(1625)

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question, but unfortunately the comments she made are not accurate.

In fact, our government has increased funding to CSIS and the RCMP by over one-third. Our government has provided \$700 million more than the last years of the Liberals. That is a lot of money. It is a priority for this government to make sure Canada is safe.

The bill before us, Bill C-44, provides that balance that the NDP has spoken about. I hope those members will be part of that balance to make sure that Canada is secure, and civil liberties and Canadians are protected.

To be misleading by discussing funding cuts when in fact funding has increased is very unfortunate, and I hope the member will get on board.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is aimed at trying to understand something here.

My hon. colleague spoke about the need in some cases to protect informants or sources. I can understand that intuitively, and the reasons he brought forward are logical, but at the same time I would like to better understand exactly what is involved.

I am not a lawyer, but if somebody is accused of an act of terrorism, for example, I assume there is some sort of proceeding in a court. Is it as simple as the prosecution saying that it has information from a source that the accused did this or that? Is that the way it would actually happen, where the informant's identity is hidden and what is put out by the prosecution is taken as fact? Is that the way it works?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. It is a good one.

It is a fundamental condition of good democracy that we provide the judiciary with discretion, and that is built into Bill C-44. The courts would have the discretion to make an exception. At the order of a judge, the identity of a human source could be disclosed if that information were critical to proving the innocence of the accused at the criminal trial, or where the judge determines that the individual were not a human source or that information would not reveal the source's identity.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise here today to discuss the important measures contained in Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act. Our government has a duty to keep Canadians safe, and the bill contains prudent and responsible measures that give our law enforcement and security agencies the support and tools they need to protect our national security.

Before I begin the substance of my speech today, I would like to reflect on a quote from a constitutional lawyer and author. Phyllis Schlafly once said:

In a world of inhumanity, war and terrorism...citizenship is a very precious possession.

That is a very important part of what we are here to talk about today. Several key measures designed to keep Canadians safe are in this legislation. I will touch on each of them.

However, first I would like to talk about the measures to give effect to legislation recently passed in Parliament. I am talking about the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act. The key part of this legislation was about stripping citizenship from Canadian citizens who are engaging in terrorist activity. The bill before us today would expedite this measure coming into force. That is a very good thing. We have seen, sadly, numerous instances in the past several weeks in which Canada has been afflicted by terrorism. These acts have highlighted some of the challenges of keeping our citizens safe in a changing world.

We just saw, this past weekend, some extremely gruesome footage of Islamic State terrorists beheading 18 men, including an American humanitarian aid worker and former U.S. Ranger, Peter Kassig. In cold blood, these terrorists cut off the heads of nearly two dozen fellow men simply because they disagree. This is the definition of barbarism and pure evil. Should any of those terrorists be Canadian citizens, I believe we would all agree they should not have the precious possession of Canadian citizenship.

I know that some of my colleagues opposite, specifically those from the Liberal Party, have previously disagreed with this notion. I hope that recent events will give them cause to realign their thinking.

My constituents do not agree with the leader of the Liberal Party when he says that taking the passport away from someone who is planning on travelling for a terrorist purpose is "an affront to Canadian values."

The legislation before us today would do more than simply create a technical fix to bring legislation into force. It would also create, for the first time, protection for intelligence sources that is similar to that for law enforcement sources. Individuals on the ground in war-torn countries who work with CSIS are often putting themselves and their families at great personal risk. They do it simply because they know it is the right thing to do. We will not force their identities to be disclosed unless it impedes the right to a fair trial.

I make that point very deliberately. The bill before us today has a specific exemption to protect the rule of law, because we believe in the fundamental protection of individual freedoms, rights, and the rule of law. To do otherwise in the face of a threat would be allowing the terrorists to win. However, we must also strike the appropriate balance. We must not overreact, but we must not underreact to the threat of terrorism. These threats are real and must be taken very seriously in order to keep Canadians safe.

There are many common-sense solutions that can be brought to bear to combat terrorism, including those we are debating today. They include measures in the area of surveillance, detention, and arrest.

•(1630)

I am pleased to hear that the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and others are working on bringing these tools forward.

Government Orders

However, those tools are a matter for another day. I would like to discuss the next piece of the bill, which confirms that CSIS would have the authority to conduct investigations outside of Canada and which confirms that the Federal Court would only have to consider relevant Canadian law when authorizing these activities.

There are two points that underscore the importance of this measure. First, all intrusive activities conducted by CSIS are judicially authorized. There is no freelancing or haphazard violation of privacy. Second, it is important that only Canadian laws be considered in authorizing these warrants. Currently, and bizarrely, the courts consider whether the decrees of a foreign dictator would be broken when CSIS was engaging in an investigation to protect Canadian security. I would argue that the Canadian Constitution is the only relevant document.

The last element of the bill that I would like to touch on today is the protection of the identity of CSIS employees who are likely to become engaged in covert activities. Currently, it is an offence to disclose the identity of an employee who is engaged in these activities, but there is no protection for individuals who are training to become covert operators or those who are in between covert activities. These individuals are just as at risk as individuals actively engaged in surveillance work. They must also be protected, and the bill would fix that situation.

As we debate these measures today, it is important to place them in some context and make note of our Conservative government's strong record of enhancing public safety and national security. We have given law enforcement new tools by making it a crime to go overseas to engage in terrorist activity. We have given authorities tools to strip Canadian citizenship from those engaged in terrorist activities. We have increased the funding for our national security agencies, such as the RCMP and CSIS, by a third. We introduced new measures to allow our national security agencies to better track threats in Canada.

These are all important measures, but there still remains more work to be done. That is why I urge all of my colleagues in this place to join me in supporting this vital legislation, which represents another prudent and responsible step forward to protect our national security.

• (1635)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, again, I must reiterate this. They are trying to make it look as if they did not cut any funding out of public safety, but they did. They can take the money out and say that they have put some back in, but it does not change the fact that they have already taken some money out and that it has already been shortchanged.

My colleague spoke about the changes to the Citizenship Act, which are in this bill as well. That is interesting, because the amendments to the Citizenship Act would not actually provide any real change, other than accelerating the timelines for citizenship revocation for dual citizens involved in terrorist activities and other serious crimes.

We have had some debate on this with respect to the previous bill that they tabled about revoking citizenship. I am concerned that everything they are doing would remove some of the civilian

oversight that should be in place. It would not protect the civilian oversight.

As we have mentioned before, with respect to the revocation of citizenship, the fact is that we have immigrants who are here and who do not know anything about any other country. We have to be mindful about how we do business, and we need to ensure that, when we put legislation in place, it will actually withstand the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Can the member tell me whether or not what they are putting in place would actually withstand a challenge under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

Mr. Phil McColeman: Mr. Speaker, let me just say from the outset that in no way, shape, or form is civilian oversight diminished in the current bill we are discussing nor in any other bills that we have placed before Parliament that protect public safety.

I will again take issue with the member saying the opposite to what is actual fact, which is that we have increased the budgets for the RCMP and CSIS by a third. That is a fact and something that again needs to be clarified.

What we are talking about is taking steps to confirm that the existing powers of CSIS are the powers that are under the rule of law in this country. When citizens come to this country, they have to understand the laws of Canada and understand that if they are to live in this country they will need to abide by the laws of this country. That is what we are here for as legislators, to set those laws and make sure that the citizens who come here realize that we all abide by that rule of law.

• (1640)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a fundamental mischaracterization of some of the challenges we are facing. This notion that people come to this country to create some of the challenges we are facing is not borne out by the fact that Canadian-born citizens have become responsible for some of the issues we are trying to deal with here.

The member opposite spoke about the Constitution being fundamental to this issue. He described this bill as something that would strengthen citizenship by in fact undermining its basic tenets—to take away someone's citizenship is to weaken the meaning of citizenship completely.

The issue that concerns us most is this way in which the Conservative Party speaks out of both sides of its mouth on the issues of judicial oversight. The Conservatives complain about activist judges, and they complain about judges who use too much discretion, yet now we are supposed to rely on those very same judges to use their discretion in a way that makes us safe.

I would like the member opposite to clarify his remarks. Does this party trust judicial discretion? If it does, why is it such a big fan of mandatory minimum sentences?

Mr. Phil McColeman: Mr. Speaker, with respect, the hon. member's last comment has nothing to do with the debate here today. It goes off into another area, which is typical of the Liberal members.

Government Orders

He talks about the fact that, if individuals in this country are known as terrorists who are intending to travel for the purposes of expanding their role as terrorists, somehow it infringes on their personal freedoms and rights that we would take citizenship away. That is the position of the Liberal Party. It is totally unacceptable.

Mr. John Barlow (MacLeod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to rise for the debate on this very important issue.

I would like to start with a pretty simple statement, one which I think may be a radical notion to some of my colleagues. Evil is real, and evil exists in the world around us today. Canadians listening to this debate at home may say that this is an obvious statement, but listening to some of the members opposite and beside me, this is one that bears repeating.

We see evil in many facets of our life. It endangers our communities, our homes and our families. The most recent manifestation of this evil has shown itself in the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, known as ISIL. It has engaged in untold and unbelievable atrocities, shocking the senses of ordinary Canadians and decent human beings around the globe.

This past weekend a video was released showing more than a dozen men being beheaded by ISIL terrorists, including the American aid worker and former U.S. army ranger, Peter Kassig. Kassig's parents wrote on Twitter that they were heartbroken to learn their son had lost his life as a result of his love for Syrian people and his desire to ease their suffering. However, I was heartened to see our Conservative government condemn the barbaric actions of these terrorists in the strongest possible terms.

In addition to these horrific scenes from Iraq and Syria, recent frightening terrorist attacks right here at home are a stark reminder that ISIL is a threat to every Canadian. Perhaps we were naive to think the atrocities happening in far off places, in areas of the world that we may never visit, could happen right here at home and could impact us.

Unfortunately they have happened here, and we must use all available means at our disposal to ensure this does not happen again. If we do not, we are simply failing in our duty.

We must take action. This is why we are taking part in the coalition currently conducting air strikes against ISIL and supporting the security forces in Iraq in their fight against this terrorist threat. It is also the reason we are working diligently to strengthen the tools available to the police and intelligence community in Canada. The protection of Canada from terrorists act is just the first step in our efforts to ensure police and intelligence services have the tools at their disposal to keep our communities and our families safe.

Let us take a moment to look back at what our government has already done in the area of protecting Canada and our national security from those who wish to harm us.

First, we have given law enforcement new tools by making it a crime to go overseas to participate in terrorist activity. We have also given authorities tools to strip Canadian citizenship from those engaged in terrorist activity. We have increased funding to our national security agencies, including the RCMP and CSIS, by one-third. Finally, we have introduced new measures to allow our national security agencies to better track threats against Canada.

This is a good foundation, and we should be proud of the work done by those entrusted to protect all of us. However, recent events, including those which took place just mere steps from where we are today, show more needs to be done to ensure our national security.

As I have stated, Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act, is one tool which will allow us to achieve that goal. This legislation addresses four problems which have stymied CSIS over the years.

First, the bill would confirm CSIS would have the authority to conduct investigations outside of Canada. This is something that is common sense, but it really does need legal clarity.

Second, it would confirm that the Federal Court could issue warrants for CSIS to investigate, within or outside Canada's boundaries, any threat to the security of Canadians.

Third, this would give the Federal Court the authority to only consider relevant Canadian laws when issuing warrants authorizing intrusive activities conducted by CSIS abroad.

Last, it would create an automatic protection for the identity of CSIS human sources subject to the protection of the right to a fair trial.

I would like to take time to emphasize that last point.

Like all Canadians, our Conservative government values freedom, liberty and the rule of law. While some have accused this government of trying to use the horrific events of late October as a pretext to clamp down on civil liberties, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact the legislation before us today contains a clause that specifically enshrines the fundamental right to a fair trial.

Let me be abundantly clear. We will not overreact in response to the recent terrorist attacks. However, it is also time that we stop under reacting to the threats against us here in Canada. Bill C-44 would give our national security agencies some of the tools they would need to protect Canadians from terrorists, while at the same time respecting the rights of all of us.

● (1645)

We will never turn our back on the fundamental Canadian values to respect individual rights and the rule of law.

I am pleased to see my colleagues in the other parties will be supporting this legislation being studied by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. This represents a major and positive step forward, and I applaud them for making an informed decision. I say that because previously the NDP voted against legislation making it illegal for individuals to travel abroad to engage in terrorist activities.

This is really quite relevant when we consider the media's reporting that some of those gruesome acts committed by ISIL over the last weekend, which I referenced earlier, were committed by a British medical student. All of us here have also seen radicalized Canadians who have gone overseas to participate in terrorist attacks and terrorist activities in Syria and Iraq.

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Even further afield than that, the Liberal leader has said that he believes revoking a passport from a terrorist is an affront to Canadian values. I could not disagree more. What is more, the leaders of both major opposition parties refused to call the individual who killed Corporal Nathan Cirillo a terrorist, even though it was clear he had religious and ideological motives and despite the fact the Commissioner of the RCMP confirmed what all of us already knew, this was a terrorist act. Opposition members seemed to ignore the clear evidence that was in front of them.

That is why I began my speech today to remind all of us that evil does exist in this world today. This is not merely a piece of political rhetoric. Nor is it something drawn up in the backrooms by Conservatives. It represents issues facing all of us as legislators. If we are being responsible, if we are respecting the office we hold and if we are standing up for those who sent us here, we will take this issue seriously.

I am truly glad to see that both of the opposition parties have rejected their previous position and now support providing our police and intelligence officials with the tools they need to keep all of us safe, tools they must have to protect our communities, our homes and, speaking as a father and husband, to protect our families. I hope the support for our Conservative government's common sense and balanced approach to national security continues in the future.

• (1650)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this bill certainly needs to have that discussion. As I said, we will be making some recommendations for changes at committee stage.

What we are disappointed about is the bill does not include improved civilian oversight of CSIS, and that is very important. Over and over again, we heard the need for that to occur. If the government wants to enhance the powers of CSIS, it must also act on recommendations to strengthen the civilian oversight. As we indicated, civil liberties are at stake and we need to ensure we get it right if we are to make such drastic changes.

Some of the proposed changes could significantly impact the judicial proceedings and that is why it needs to be looked at quite closely. We also need to examine the government's safeguards around information sharing with allies to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place.

There have been people who have ended up on the no-fly list, but they had done nothing wrong. They were not terrorists or had never been charged. One of my colleagues had been on the no-fly list. We need to ensure that all of those safeguards are in place. More important, we need to ensure that civilian oversight is in place.

Could the member confirm that civilian oversight will not be an either/or, that there will be civilian oversight in the bill to protect civilians?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, my colleague brought up some good points, but I want to reiterate what I said earlier. The bill does enshrine the rule of law and that CSIS, as in the past, must act strictly by Canadian law. The bill would further strengthen that Canadians and people around the world who CSIS might deal with, whether it is within our borders or outside our borders, it must act and follow

Canadian law. That is an important aspect of the bill which is further solidified in this document.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all share a desire to make our country safer for our families and all Canadians. I do not think that is in dispute.

If we look at the laws that are on the books, for example, it is illegal to go abroad to participate in a terrorist organization. Those laws already exist. What has been extended is the ability of judges to use their discretion and police forces to use their investigative techniques to prosecute those individuals differently. That happens under a cloak of judicial discretion and there is no way of checking to see whether discretion is being applied properly.

A cornerstone of good lawmaking is civilian oversight. It is why we are here, yet we find ourselves in a situation of being asked to support legislation that makes it extremely difficult to get a passport, while at the same time contemplating making it easier to get assault weapons. Individuals are deemed too dangerous to get a passport, but not dangerous enough to be prevented from getting semi-automatic weapons. In fact, the party opposite is actually proposing to take the RCMP out of the equation when it comes to accessing very dangerous weapons.

Why is a passport more dangerous to the safety of Canadians than semi-automatic weapons?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, comparing the ability to access a passport and a semi-automatic weapon is a pretty far reach. If we were to ask almost any law-abiding gun owner about some of the issues they face in getting licences and using their firearms, they are quite extensive compared to what it takes to get a passport.

The opportunity for us to revoke citizenship and passports from those who we know, and our security forces have identified, as either planning terrorist acts or going abroad to participate in terrorist acts is something we need to do. As I said before, CSIS will be governed by the rule of law and our courts, and everybody will have an opportunity for a fair trial.

• (1655)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I as well rise to speak in support of Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act. The bill aims to make amendments to the way CSIS, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, does business.

CSIS was created in 1984 in response to the McDonald commission's identifying a need for an intelligence service independent from the RCMP. Thirty years later, the nature of the work CSIS does has changed dramatically, and Bill C-44 is about having our laws reflect these changes.

As evidenced by recent events, be it the acts of terrorism on Canadian soil, the barbarism of ISIL in Iraq and Syria, or the actions of jihadist groups such as Boko Haram in Africa, it is clear that the threats we face have evolved.

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The protection of Canada from terrorists act would help our intelligence service better identify and respond to the threats we face today. This would ultimately protect both Canadians and Canadian values.

Presently CSIS operates in a much more limited scope than many Canadians realize. I believe many Canadians would be appalled to discover that CSIS agents cannot protect their identities when they travel outside of Canada.

It is equally unthinkable that their human sources, the individuals upon which national security cases may depend, are not protected to the same level as informants in cases such as organized crime.

I also believe Canadians would be shocked to learn that CSIS has not been mandated to work outside of Canada.

The protection of Canada from terrorists act aims to fix all this. It would essentially work by providing our intelligence services the tools most Canadians believe they already have and always should have had.

CSIS does a remarkable job in protecting Canadians. I thank the women and men of the service for the work they do every day in keeping Canadians safe. They truly are unsung heroes when it comes to protecting this country.

It is time to give them a hand. CSIS agents should not have to risk their safety and security when working abroad. Bill C-44 aims to correct all this. It represents the modernization of CSIS, the first major changes to the operation of the organization since its establishment.

In 1984, when CSIS was created, the Cold War was still raging. Russia was in Afghanistan, and Communism was the greatest threat to world peace. Much has changed since this time and, yet the legislative structure of CSIS has remained the same.

While the Leader of the Opposition may be debating what constitutes terrorism—and indeed, will not even utter the words—on this side of the House, it is clear. The past month has plainly demonstrated the terrorist threat to Canadians, and when terrorists threaten the Canadian way of life, we must take reasonable and responsible measures to strike back.

As my colleague, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, has said, we must not under-react or overreact; however, the reality is that freedom is not free. Our military's actions in Iraq have struck multiple terrorist targets, including equipment being used to divert a river in order to force civilians onto roads that are more easily attacked.

The threat is more diffuse than it once was. The ranks of ISIL and other terrorist organizations are filled with foreign fighters, brainwashed and converted westerners who travel to these regions to engage in war crimes and acts of barbarism. These individuals are often converted at home before travelling abroad.

The bill would help ensure that our intelligence service can gather intelligence on these individuals while they are abroad, so as to ensure they face the full weight of our justice system if they return.

The radicalization of individuals often occurs in their homes. As such, it is often members of the family who first see the signs that could alert authorities to potential threats. Whether they are family, friends, or co-workers, it is important to remove all the obstacles from the path of those willing to testify against those who would commit acts of terrorism against all Canadians.

That is why the provision in the bill that would provide for the protection of human sources is so important. Those taking this step should be commended and be provided the best protection we can offer, in hopes that they and others would be encouraged to testify and put dangerous individuals behind bars.

● (1700)

Witnesses should not face the uncertainty of their identity potentially being exposed to the media and those who would do them harm. By providing all witnesses protection in these sensitive cases, we can ensure that others will be willing to come forward, in turn ensuring that dangerous individuals are put behind bars.

While there are those who have expressed concern regarding the anonymity of sources, I note that there is a provision in the bill that would protect the right to a fair trial. I would draw members' attention to proposed subsection 18.1(4) in the bill.

This subsection would provide for an amicus curiae, which literally means “friend of the court”, who is charged to act as a special advocate to determine the validity of maintaining the source's anonymity when there is belief that it is essential to establishing the innocence of the accused. In this way, a neutral third party is used to ensure that the Canadian value of a right to a fair trial is properly balanced with the safety and security of those who would testify to make Canada a safer place.

While I am not a lawyer, I believe this provision would successfully navigate tricky constitutional waters to deliver Canadians a remarkably well-balanced and effective bill. Bill C-44 would protect Canadians from terrorists and make Canada a safer place.

The tools that Bill C-44 would provide our intelligence service are long overdue and a necessary part of modern intelligence gathering. Let us bring our spy agency up to date and in doing so protect all Canadians.

I therefore urge members of all parties to send this bill to committee, where they can study it and come to the same realization that I have: Canadians deserve the protection of Canada from terrorists act.

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Brandon—Souris for that speech as well as for his previous work on the public safety and national security committee.

It is interesting to note that in one of the last statements in your speech, you said, “It is time to bring the spy agency”—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, but the parliamentary secretary should be aware that she has to address her comments to the Chair and not to individual members of Parliament.

Ms. Roxanne James: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for reiterating that. I appreciate it.

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One of the member's last comments in his speech was with regard to bringing the spy agency up to date. I think that is important to note, because the CSIS Act was first passed way back in 1984. In fact, I remember being in high school and using my dad's typewriter to type up my first resumé to get a part-time job. I think most Canadians would agree that it is certainly time to bring the act up to date. Obviously the threats against our country and security have changed, as have the factors that participate in or contribute to that national threat.

The bill would give CSIS the ability to operate overseas and to protect its informants. I would like to ask the member what he thinks would happen if this legislation did not pass. What would happen if all of a sudden CSIS no longer had the ability to protect its human sources or informants in the same way that other law enforcement agencies do across this country, or did not have the ability to operate overseas to track terrorists who leave this country and engage in acts of terrorism across the globe?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for that question. It is a very good one.

Certainly if these people were not to receive the protection that is offered in this bill, their lives would be jeopardized. I think that is an untenable position to put Canadian people in when they are trying to do their very best in regard to the security of our country and all of its citizens.

The situation would be such that CSIS would not be able to track people in offshore areas either. It is an absolute necessity for our CSIS agents to be able to follow people who are becoming radicalized and hunting our own comrades down. They fight against democracy and freedom and against people having the life that we enjoy in our country and in many of the countries that we believe strongly in helping. Bill C-44 would certainly be a benefit to all of those countries and to ourselves in providing security to our intelligence agencies. As the member for Scarborough Centre has indicated, many informants would certainly be put at risk without the bill.

• (1705)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a special relationship with New Zealand, Australia, the U.K., and the U.S.A.. We are known as the Five Eyes group. The other four nations have what they call a parliamentary oversight, whereby politicians are afforded the opportunity to ensure that there is oversight of national security agencies.

As part of the Five Eyes group, why is Canada the only nation that does not have parliamentary oversight of its national security agencies?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I referred to proposed subsection 18.1(4) in the bill. The *amicus curiae* is an opportunity for at least some protection with regard to having an anonymous third party. This third party would keep the people in the security system anonymous, whether offshore or here in Canada, and this would benefit the security of all Canadians.

My colleague indicated that we work closely with all of these other nations. They are involved in the world's security as well. It is a privilege to be able to continue to work with them on a daily and timely basis.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to participate in this debate on Bill C-44, which we are very concerned about. As we have heard today, this bill would make changes to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, more commonly known as CSIS. The bill would also amend the Canadian Citizenship Act, which has nothing to do with CSIS, but we are starting to get used to seeing omnibus bills from this government.

I want to talk about three main concerns: the need for an in-depth study, the modernization of CSIS and the fight against radicalization. Bill C-44 is a hot topic, in light of last month's traumatic events, which we all went through. Everyone here in the House, and all Canadians, were affected by these tragic events.

First, as many of my colleagues have mentioned in previous debates, I believe that Bill C-44 is a piece of legislation that requires careful examination. It is simple. We want to send the bill to committee to be studied. This involves consulting experts in all areas, conducting comparative analyses of the measures in other countries, identifying past mistakes and shortcomings, and studying best practices here and abroad.

How will this legislation change legal proceedings? Will this bill affect my civil liberties here and abroad? Are we becoming more of a police state? These are the kinds of questions that Canadians are asking, and they deserve answers. Only a comprehensive, transparent study in a multi-party parliamentary committee can clarify this issue.

Second, we were extremely disappointed when this bill received first reading, because the bill does not strengthen civilian oversight of CSIS. Let us be clear: the bill would legally authorize CSIS to conduct security intelligence operations abroad, enable the Federal Court to issue warrants that have effect outside Canada, and protect the identity of CSIS's human intelligence sources in judicial proceedings. This combination of powers is a source of concern.

CSIS has been the subject of much criticism over the course of its existence. Its lack of a civilian oversight mechanism and the absence of accountability measures are two criticisms that often make headlines.

The Conservatives want to change CSIS's powers, but we should start by fixing what is broken. Over the past eight years, the government has ignored a number of recommendations to modernize CSIS. Take the Maher Arar inquiry, for example, and the advice of the Information Commissioner of Canada and the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. All of their recommendations are along the same lines and call for effective and increased civilian oversight of CSIS.

Some countries went to war because their intelligence agency assured them that there were weapons of mass destruction in another country. It was a hasty decision, made with little oversight, that resulted in many errors and regrets. Relying on inaccurate information or making false accusations will not help improve security—quite the opposite.

For this to work, we need to draw inspiration from best practices instead of repeating our own or others' mistakes. Currently, the CSIS oversight organization, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, is a part-time committee. Members are appointed by the Prime Minister, and one of them is a former Reform MP. Two of the seats have been vacant for months. Is that an example of best practices that we can be proud of?

Today, we have an opportunity to do things properly. The Conservatives want to make major changes to CSIS, but so do we. We want a real civilian oversight mechanism, not the inadequate committee that is currently in place.

Third, many public safety experts who appeared before House of Commons committees mentioned that there are not enough resources. Public safety agencies like CSIS have been affected by three consecutive years of budget cuts. The Conservatives seem to think that they can make up for years of cutbacks by giving the agencies more powers and responsibilities.

● (1710)

I would also like to point out a very significant shortcoming in the government's approach. The Conservatives want to combat terrorism without any real plan for addressing the root causes of radicalization. Communities are asking the government for help, but no measures have been announced to create partnerships with communities.

We support an in-depth study, but the government must be open to amending the bill. This is about keeping Canadians safe, while protecting the pillars of our inclusive democracy and therefore our shared values of freedom and tolerance.

Why not make this a Parliament of Canada bill, rather than an ideological bill? We are prepared to work with all members of the House in order to reach a parliamentary consensus.

In closing, I would like to remind the House that the first thing we need is an in-depth study demonstrating that the bill is necessary, which means conducting a full and transparent study in committee, looking at best practices around the world, and consulting with experts from all walks of life.

Next, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service needs to be completely modernized, which would include a real civilian oversight mechanism, not the one currently in place, since it is flawed. Lastly, the government must re-examine the resources available to public safety agencies and create a plan to combat radicalization, in partnership with Canadian communities.

We hope the government will be open to our proposals, so that we can reach a consensus that will benefit all Canadians.

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct a few things I heard in that speech

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that are absolutely not true. With regard to there being years of cutbacks by our government, that is contrary to what has actually happened under the Conservatives. We have increased funding for our agencies by one-third since taking office. In fact, we have increased funding for the RCMP by \$700 million and our Canadian Security Intelligence Service by \$200 million, so that is an absolute misrepresentation of the facts here in the House.

I would also like to bring to the attention of the member that in her speech she talked about having parliamentary oversight like that of the United States, but also said that the United States intelligence agencies misled their government about weapons of mass destruction, leading to the war in Iraq. Therefore, it is quite a conundrum, looking at two sides of the same stone and trying to come up with their position on this.

The real question is whether the NDP member actually understands what terrorism is. Past quotes from the Leader of the Opposition indicate that he does not believe that the attack here in Ottawa that took the life of Corporal Nathan Cirillo and attacked our government institution here on Parliament Hill was in fact terrorism in the sense that he understands it. The RCMP understands it. The Criminal Code defines it. The U.S. Secretary of State was here and said it was terrorism. In fact, the President of France stood in the House and called it terrorism. Perhaps that is the real question here: the NDP simply does not understand it.

● (1715)

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that the member is well aware that the terrorist acts committed here in Ottawa by a person who entered Parliament while we were all in the House, and the events that we went through recently, were based on values that we do not share and do not want to see.

We cannot say that those people were immigrants. They were born here in Canada. As I said in my speech, those people need help and support. Communities are asking to take some time to have a discussion and put in place measures to help individuals before they act. We know that the individual was acting alone.

[English]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about protecting Canadians' security while protecting true Canadian values, or something along those lines. I agree with that point and it is why I believe we need a broader oversight agency than the one that a number of NDP members have been proposing. I want to speak in defence of SIRC, the after-the-fact oversight agency of CSIS at the moment. It does good work, though I do not believe it has the resources to do all the work it needs to do.

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I will refer to SIRC's report entitled, "Lifting the Shroud of Secrecy", which is its last report. It outlines in a number of places serious concerns with the way that CSIS is currently operating, and I will read one quote so that the member is aware of it. It states:

With surveillance teams spread across Canada all sharing identical job functions, SIRC expected to see solid communication among surveillance practitioners. Instead, SIRC found that, for the most part, regional surveillance teams operate in total isolation from one another and communicate only sporadically with their HQ counterparts.

That is a serious concern that SIRC has found. I think it is doing its job as best it can. I do not believe there should be another civilian oversight agency, but in addition to SIRC, which provides an after-the-fact review, Parliament needs to have an oversight agency that is sworn to secrecy, can see classified documents, and can be aware of what all the national security agencies are doing together. It would ensure, on the one hand, that the national security agencies are doing their jobs and, on the other hand, that they are not exceeding their bounds and infringing on civil liberties in this country. Would the member not agree that is a necessary oversight agency?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, our national anthem says that we must protect our homes and our rights. Those two things sum up the issue very well.

We believe that the government is responsible for protecting both public safety and civil liberties.

• (1720)

[*English*]

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act. This legislation would make important changes to modernize the CSIS Act as well as bring into force provisions related to revoking the citizenship of terrorists and those who take up arms against the Canadian Armed Forces.

Our government has a strong record of action in protecting Canada's national security. We have given law enforcement new tools by making it a crime to go overseas to engage in terrorist activity. We have given authorities tools to strip Canadian citizenship from those engaged in terrorist activities. We have increased the funding for our national security agencies, such as the RCMP and CSIS, by one-third. We have introduced new measures to allow our national security agencies to better track threats to Canada. However, it is clear that there is still much more work to be done.

This past Sunday, we all saw a video released of more than a dozen men being beheaded by ISIL terrorists, including the American aid worker Peter Kassig. His parents said that they were heartbroken to learn that their son had lost his life as a result of his love for the Syrian people and his desire to ease their suffering. As Canadians, we all, in this House and across this country, condemn these barbaric actions in the strongest possible terms.

In addition to the horrific reports from Iraq and Syria, recent horrific terrorist attacks right here at home, as we all know, have been and are a stark reminder that ISIL is a threat to Canadians. That is why we are taking part in the coalition that is currently conducting air strikes against ISIL and are supporting the security forces in Iraq in their fight against this terrorist scourge. That is also the reason we

are working very determinedly to strengthen the tools available to the police and the intelligence community. The protection of Canada from terrorists acts is just the first step in our efforts to do that.

As chair of the public safety committee, I am certainly pleased to discuss in a bit more detail some of the key measures that would appear before the committee for evaluation. This bill has several key measures that I would like to discuss, then, in more detail.

First is the authority to investigate threats, collect foreign intelligence within Canada, and provide security assessments. Section 12 of the CSIS Act mandates CSIS to collect and analyze intelligence on threats to the security of Canada, and in relation to those threats, to report to and advise the Government of Canada. These threats are defined in the CSIS Act as espionage or sabotage, foreign-influenced activities that are detrimental to the interests of Canada, activities directed toward the threat or use of acts of serious violence, and activities directed toward undermining the system of government in Canada.

Section 16 of the CSIS Act authorizes CSIS to collect within Canada foreign intelligence relating to the capabilities, intentions, or activities of any foreign state or group of foreign states, subject to the restriction that its activities cannot be directed at Canadian citizens, permanent residents, or corporations.

Sections 13, 14, and 15 authorize CSIS to provide security assessments to the Government of Canada, provincial governments, and other Canadian and foreign institutions; to provide advice to ministers of the crown on matters related to the Citizenship Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; and to conduct such investigations as may be required to perform these functions.

I would like to discuss investigative techniques in more detail. Fulfilling these mandates requires that CSIS use a suite of investigative techniques. These techniques can include, among others, open-source research, physical surveillance, interviews, and analyzing intelligence from a variety of sources. Human sources, however, are at the core of CSIS's ability to fulfill its mandate to investigate and advise on threats to the security of Canada. Techniques used by CSIS may include, among others, searches of a target's place of residence, analysis of financial records, or telecommunication intercepts.

Section 21 of the CSIS Act authorizes CSIS to apply for a warrant to conduct activities where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a warrant is required to enable CSIS to investigate a threat to the security of Canada or to perform its duties and functions pursuant to Section 16 of the CSIS Act. The CSIS Act requires that the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness approve warrant applications before they are submitted to the Federal Court. Cooperation with other domestic agencies is also critical.

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•(1725)

Section 17 of the CSIS Act authorizes CSIS to co-operate with any department of the Government of Canada or the government of a province or any police force in a province. CSIS, as such, works closely with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada Border Services Agency, other government departments, and police forces across Canada. CSIS's co-operation with these entities must be approved by the Minister of Public Safety.

In investigating threat-related activities occurring outside of Canada, CSIS's relationship with Communications Security Establishment Canada is particularly important. CSIS relies heavily on the capabilities and expertise of CSE to conduct telecommunications intercepts outside of Canada.

CSE's legal authority to provide assistance to CSIS stems from paragraph 273.64(1)(c) of the National Defence Act. CSIS must obtain a warrant from the Federal Court of Canada to seek assistance from CSE to intercept the telecommunications of a Canadian outside of Canada.

As well, we cannot forget the importance of co-operation with foreign intelligence agencies. Fulfilling CSIS's mandate also requires that CSIS undertake investigative activities outside of Canada and co-operate and share intelligence with foreign entities. Targets of CSIS's investigations often depart Canada to engage in a range of threat-related activities. At the same time, in some cases, threats to the security of Canada develop entirely outside of Canada.

CSIS cannot limit itself to undertaking investigative activities only within Canada. Pursuant to section 17 of the CSIS Act, CSIS may, with the approval of the Minister of Public Safety, after consulting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, enter into an arrangement or otherwise co-operate with the government of a foreign state or an institution thereof.

Unfortunately, in the past, the opposition has been less than supportive of measures to keep Canadians safe from terrorists. The NDP voted against making it a criminal offence to travel abroad to engage in terrorism. The Liberal leader has said that it was an affront to Canadian values to strip passports from those who may engage in terrorist acts.

I am pleased to see that all parties in the House have expressed support for further studying this important bill at committee. I hope that this support continues, and I encourage all members to support these most important measures.

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, defending public safety and civil liberties are both key responsibilities of any government. What we have seen from the Conservative side over the last three years have been cuts to Public Safety to the tune of more than \$688 million. Of that, \$24 million in cuts have been made to CSIS.

If we are going to ensure safety for Canadians, how can the government justify cutting the very tools needed to provide that safety? Can the member respond to this question?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Mr. Speaker, I have two points.

First, regretfully, I heard one of the members of the official opposition state that balance was not necessary, that balance between

civil liberties and public safety was not necessary. That is absolutely shocking.

However, when it comes to reductions, the fact remains that over the past number of years, we have added, by one third, the amount of expenditures for our surveillance services.

There has been a reduction as of late. However, we met with CSIS Director Michel Coulombe, Commissioner Paulson from the RCMP, the minister, and senior departmental people. We asked them if the reduction has had any influence on their ability to do the job for Canadians. They assured us that it did not. They knew darn well that the small reductions were made at the administrative level, at the front office level, and have had absolutely not been enacted on those in the field of operations.

•(1730)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always great to hear the chair of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security hold forth, and I like the opportunity to question him.

He would know that we support the bill going to committee, in general. We will have some questions on how to protect foreign sources. The minister failed to answer.

I would ask the chair if he knows why the government is not using the tools that are already available to it in terms of protecting Canadians from terrorism. Section 83.181 of the Criminal Code has penalties for those who leave or attempt to leave Canada for terrorist purposes abroad. The government has not used that section. The chair of the committee will certainly know that Bill S-7 reinstated the provisions allowing for preventive arrest, and the government has not used that section either.

I ask the chair of the committee if there is a reason the government is not using the tools that are already available to it. We support the bill, but why are Conservatives not using the tools currently available?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Mr. Speaker, I certainly welcome the interjection of my hon. colleague. Though we may occasionally have a philosophical difference, I do respect the time he has spent in the House and as Attorney General. He certainly has experience in this field.

As such, I think he made a very clear point. To obtain a warrant and/or have a course of action, we must have sufficient evidence to access those instruments. One of the challenges we have is that without the proper legislation, without the proper oversight, without the capacity and ability to ask for functions, we have instruments in place right now that we cannot fully utilize.

Give us the opportunity to offer more scrutiny so that when we approach the judiciary, the departmental level, or the senior bureaucrats within the department, they will know that they will then operate within the expanded capacity of investigative techniques that are sufficient to allow them to act with the warrant. Without that, there are so many times we sit with our hands tied and are not able to properly defend the interests of Canada.

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Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak about something that is very near and dear to my heart, oversight, in particular of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

We have before us Bill C-44. This legislation would amend a statute that is now 30 years old and obviously needs some fine tuning, which this bill would provide. I say at the outset that we would support this legislation and hope to address some of its deficiencies in detail at the appropriate committee at the appropriate time.

The thing that strikes me as wanting in this legislation is its failure to address oversight in a meaningful way. Currently, the chair of that committee is the former co-chair of the Conservative campaign. Another individual on the committee is a prominent, well-respected lawyer but is the former law partner of former prime minister Mulroney. A security person, a well-respected police intelligence person, rounds out the threesome on the committee.

I had the opportunity to be counsel to the Security Intelligence Review Committee when the first chair of that committee was established, the hon. Ron Atkey, a former Conservative minister of immigration. In those days there were five members on the committee, not three, and they were appointed after real consultation with those parties having more than 12 members in the House. That meant there were Liberals, Conservatives, and New Democrats on that committee, so the Canadian public could have genuine confidence that they would do their oversight work taking into account the views of most Canadians.

I had the opportunity to work with the late Rosemary Brown, a prominent member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, doing national security hearings in those days. I had the opportunity to work with Liberals. I had the opportunity to work with Saul Cherniack from Manitoba. Those days appear to be gone.

The framers of the CSIS Act, the bill that is now 30 years old, wanted to get it right. They wanted to make sure Canadians would have confidence, given the incredibly intrusive powers provided to this secret police intelligence-gathering service. It is critical for the excellent work that CSIS does that there be that oversight in which Canadians can have confidence.

The former head of SIRC, Mr. Porter, languishes in a Panamanian jail. We have three people, none of whom appear to have any connection with the opposition in the House whatsoever. That contrasts dramatically with what used to be the case when the hon. Ron Atkey chaired SIRC and insisted that there be that kind of credibility. Why are we debating a bill to modernize CSIS that does not even address these obviously patent inadequacies in that statute?

The other thing missing is that the inspector general no longer exists. That officer, the late Richard Gosse, was highly respected on all sides of the House. He did some of the heavy lifting for Canadians, to make sure they could go in and do root and branch assessments of CSIS operations and provide confidence that, as the inspector general's reports provided, it was working within the four corners of the law.

This legislation deserves support, but it needs to get it right on such an important issue as oversight. The legislation has essentially

nothing to say on oversight, and that is a real, tragic shortcoming. I hope the government would be willing to address that deficiency when we get the bill to the appropriate committee of this place for further review.

This bill deals with our fundamental freedoms as Canadians. To think that it would not include that oversight function to make sure our rights and freedoms are protected shows the government's complete disdain for that kind of oversight that would give Canadians the confidence we must have when we give a police department, an intelligence-gathering operation like this, these kinds of powers. I am sad that this bill, which could have got it right and done these things properly, does not go there at all.

The idea of acting abroad, the second of the two things that this legislation would do, is fine.

• (1735)

It is kind of hard to know how our court would be able to issue warrants with effect outside Canada, but that has to be dealt with in terms of national sovereignty. Nevertheless, I understand the intent. It regularizes what, no doubt, is already going on and provides the cloak of rule of law over those operations.

Providing greater protection to the identity of human intelligence sources is another matter that is clearly worthy of our support. Undertaking operations overseas was a matter of great debate 30 years ago when the CSIS Act was before the House. Bill C-44 would clarify the authority of CSIS to conduct security intelligence operations abroad, but only if those operations could be demonstrated to deal with genuine threats to the national security of Canada. That needs to be underlined. In that context, I would like to go into it in some more detail.

Operating abroad to investigate threats to the security of Canada is something that many have asserted has already been undertaken. In other words, this would simply provide legal authority for operations that are already extant in Canada and abroad. Therefore, to provide the cloak of rule of law over those operations is important. We cannot have, in Canada or overseas, intrusive activities that do not come under the cloak of rule of law. Therefore, I commend Bill C-44 for providing that legal cover, so that Canadians can be sure that operations going on not only in our country but also abroad have that legal cover, if I can call it that, to provide rule of law protection, so to speak, for those kinds of activities.

The other thing that needs to be said is that CSIS uses a number of different kinds of investigative techniques that are well known. One of them is a critical one in practical terms, and that is human sources talking to people about activities for which CSIS has genuine concern because they affect the national security of Canada, such as counter-espionage, of course, and counterterrorism being one of the biggest ones now.

Providing protection for the identity of those sources is absolutely critical if people are going to have confidence to come forward to CSIS in order to address issues that could affect the security of us all. Protecting people's identities means protecting their lives and security.

Private Members' Business

Being able to facilitate the sharing of intelligence with other intelligence agencies is also what many members in this debate have talked about, because CSIS is not an island in itself. CSIS is part of an international operation with other agencies. They share information all the time. They share human source information and other information, all designed to keep us safe in this country. That is what needs to be addressed here.

The protections being sought are important. The devil is always in the detail. That is why the committee will look at this in great detail, but the objective cannot be criticized at all in this legislation.

I will now end where I began. This bill represents an enormous missed opportunity. To not address the woeful inadequacy of the civilian oversight of CSIS is something that the House ought to insist be addressed, and I hope that when the bill gets to committee, there will be that opportunity. To allow this oversight agency to wither to the extent that it has is a national disgrace. To have three part-time people who apparently have, unlike in the past, no connection with opposition politics is, to me, exactly counter to what was sought 30 years ago when we made the brave choice to create our own national security service, CSIS. No inspector general, part-time, and mostly non-NDP and non-Liberal members on an oversight body just does not cut it.

• (1740)

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have repeatedly raised with a number of members in this place today the concern about the fact that I do not see the recommendations that came from Justice O'Connor in the Maher Arar case and the recommendations that came from Justice Iacobucci in the Abdullah Almalki case in Bill C-44. I would like the member to comment, because those were for the protection of the rights of Canadians and will be very critical moving forward. Hopefully the committee will be able to address it. I understand the focus and intent of the bill, but we do not see those protections.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, we spent a lot of money and endured international embarrassment for what happened in the tragedy of Maher Arar. Justice O'Connor conducted a thorough investigation, which made a number of important recommendations that have yet to be implemented

Justice Iacobucci did the same thing in the Almalki case.

We have this background. That is why the bill needs to be of particular concern. In the face of all that excellent advice we received, at great expense, none of those recommendations appear to be found in this bill. That is why the bill is even more problematic: we have no excuse for not going forward with the excellent advice that those two learned jurists provided to us.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It being 5:45 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

• (1745)

[*English*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It being 5:46 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business, as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.) moved that Bill C-613, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act and the Access to Information Act (transparency), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak on Bill C-613—the transparency act—my private member's bill offering concrete reforms to raise the bar on openness in government. Since the beginning of my leadership campaign, I have been talking about the need to improve the transparency of our institutions. I do believe that this is how we can restore a sense of trust in our democracy.

[*English*]

In my leadership campaign, I offered specific proposals on democratic reform: particularly, ending the practice of appointments of candidates by party leaders and, instead, holding open nominations; loosening the grip of the Prime Minister's Office on Parliament; working with all parties to consider electoral reform; banning partisan government advertising; and embracing evidence-based scrutiny.

After my election, our Liberal caucus also put forward the open Parliament plan, a tangible strategy to shine more light on what happens here on Parliament Hill. The plan called for more frequent and accessible reports of all parliamentarians' spending data, as well as mandatory performance audits of both Houses every three years by the Auditor General.

[*Translation*]

The open parliament plan called for the creation of public guidelines for more detailed audits, ending the secretive nature of the Board of Internal Economy, and the proactive disclosure of parliamentarians' expenses at the standard of government ministers.

Private Members' Business

That announcement was not just about the ideas themselves; it was also about demonstrating a willingness to raise the bar on openness and transparency, and it was about working across the aisle to achieve results.

[*English*]

While it took a bit longer than we might have hoped, hon. members unanimously agreed to adopt the Liberal model and create a new system of proactive disclosure. It was a great example of how parliamentarians could work together.

It was also the Liberal Party that took steps to reduce partisanship and patronage in the Senate, by limiting membership in the national Liberal caucus to elected MPs only.

We are committed to instituting an open, transparent and non-partisan appointment process for that upper house. Taken together, these actions can end the partisan and patronage-based nature of the Senate, all without launching a new round of constitutional negotiations.

We are proud of what we have done so far, but there is more we can do. With this private member's bill, I wanted to offer an additional step in the continuing effort to raise the bar on openness and transparency, not just in Parliament but in government.

The transparency act would improve openness in government in two fundamental ways.

• (1750)

[*Translation*]

First, it significantly strengthens Canada's access to information laws by mandating that government information is open by default.

Second, it achieves another goal in our open parliament plan by ending the secretive nature of the Board of Internal Economy.

Achieving a more open government makes sense for Canada. Governments around the world that embrace this concept have demonstrated new ways to reduce costs, spark entrepreneurial initiatives, and aid the public and private sectors in better serving citizens. After all, a country's access to information system is at the heart of open government.

There is no doubt that our current access to information regime is outdated and needs to be updated to reflect governance and technologies in the 21st century. The world's strongest access to information systems have been updated within the last five years. Ours is stuck in the 1980s.

[*English*]

As we know well, Canada's record on its access to information and privacy system has been criticized by the Information Commissioner, the press, researchers and independent experts. Proposals for reforming our access to information and privacy regime are certainly nothing new. Members from all parties in this place have advanced the need for reform, most recently the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

I would like to collaborate with all parliamentarians to implement the following reforms.

First, the transparency act would legislate that all government data and information would be open by default and would be available in user-friendly formats that would keep up with modern technologies.

Second, the act would require that only the initial \$5.00 request be paid by Canadians, with no additional fees added on later.

Third, the Information Commissioner's mandate would be expanded so she herself could enforce information laws and ensure that government information would always open by default.

Fourth, the act would require a statutory review of our access to information laws within 90 days of this bill receiving royal assent and every five years thereafter. This would ensure that the regime would reflect modern technologies and would continue to serve Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The Information Commissioner herself has insisted that:

[r]eal improvement in the [access to information] system will only come from modernizing the Act—a long-overdue step that is crucial to advancing the cause of transparency and accountability in Canada.

I agree, and I know that many of us in this place do too.

As I have already addressed, the transparency act would also make the House of Commons' Board of Internal Economy open by default.

Today, parliamentarians are making decisions about the regulations that govern our own spending with insufficient public scrutiny. Our parliamentary system enables parliamentarians to govern themselves, but it must be done in the open.

I share the view of many that we need an open board and a system of oversight more similar to that in the upper house.

[*English*]

When inappropriate spending in the other place was examined, Canadians were better served by an oversight body that was accessible to the press and to the public. Like the upper house, the reforms included in this transparency act would provide the flexibility to go in camera when sensitive, personal or personnel matters are discussed.

However, in fairness to those who currently sit on the Board of Internal Economy, their discussions are now kept secret by law, a reality which has been affirmed to me in my consultations with parliamentary counsel. The statutory oath of secrecy can only be overcome with a legislative change, and the transparency act would offer that. It is time to change that law.

I believe that by bringing openness to board conversations, we can better serve Canadians. They have demanded more accountability, rightly so, and they will get more accountability.

Private Members' Business

It is with a positive spirit and optimism about its passing that I introduce the transparency act in the House of Commons. I consulted on this bill with Canadians across the country throughout the summer and fall. I have heard what Canadians think about the state of transparency and accountability within our government. It is abundantly clear to me that they have an appetite for change. Canadians are looking for a better, open and modern government.

• (1755)

[Translation]

The Liberal Party is genuinely committed to working with all parties to pass the transparency act in the House of Commons. Just as we did in achieving the proactive disclosure of parliamentary expenses, we want to achieve an all-party consensus to pass the transparency act. We are open to amendments, suggestions, and improvements, and we hope that members of all parties will engage in meaningful debate and questions on the bill that I have spoken on today.

[English]

The important reforms included in the transparency act are fully achievable. The fate of this bill is not in the hands of the government alone; it is also in the hands of individual members of Parliament from all parties. Together, we can make a difference and provide Canadians with an example of parliamentarians reaching across the aisle in pursuit of a common goal.

I am convinced that in the service of all Canadians, we can work together within Parliament to raise the bar on openness and transparency in our democracy.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader said that he favours transparency, and we should all favour transparency. That is why I stood in the House and voted in favour of union financial transparency, given that unions have access to an unfettered amount of money through mandatory union dues that are given to them through the force of law and benefit from tax-sheltered dues at the same time.

It is also why I supported the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, which has allowed Canadians to find out that, in some instances, the leadership of certain bands has been taking enormous sums of money when the people on those reserves could have used that money for the basic needs and necessities of life.

If the hon. member is now taking a position in favour of transparency, will he rise today and announce that he has changed his mind and that he will extend that principle of transparency to support the First Nations Financial Transparency Act and union financial transparency?

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I take it from the comments of the member opposite in support of transparency that he is supportive of these measures on transparency. Transparency is something to which we should aspire, and that is why first nations are indeed supportive of the move toward transparency. What they are not supportive of is imposed partisan attacks for political reasons from the top down.

This country has too long imposed on first nations its way of doing things. We need to build partnerships, and that is why I am

committed to transparency for first nations built in partnership with them.

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the member will get much argument from the NDP with respect to the importance of transparency. On June 18, 2013, we wanted to pass a motion to unanimously propose to entrench independent oversight of parliamentary expenditures.

I would like to ask the leader of the Liberal Party this. Even the best possible reform of access to information, basically changing the rules, will never be sufficient if the people in power conspire to thwart the system. With respect to the Board of Internal Economy, what is substantial in his bill to ensure that those in power would not manipulate the system?

• (1800)

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the Board of Internal Economy, the guarantee is that it is composed of members from all parties of the House, including the member's party, and it would require unanimous consent, so consent by his party as well, to go in camera. The fact is that open by default for the Board of Internal Economy can only be achieved through a change made to the Parliament of Canada Act. That is what we are proposing right now.

We are happy the New Democrats continue to support it, as they have all along.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating our leader for the courageous decisions he has already taken and for the courage of his convictions in putting forth this private member's bill.

I want to go back to something he alluded to at the very beginning of his remarks. He talked about expanding on two important measures: first, opening up a secretive Board of Internal Economy; and, second, opening up and making more transparent all government information when we live in a time of incredible modern technology. Access to information is critical.

However, he alluded to something very important, which I think is foundational to his intention here today. Could he help us understand how this would drive up confidence, confidence in government generally in the 21st century, and trust and confidence in our democratic institutions in Canada?

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, Canadians across the country are growing increasingly cynical about the good work that happens in the House. One of the ways of turning that cynicism around and drawing Canadians back into the process is to recognize that Canadians are now empowered with more knowledge and information about what is going on in the world around them than ever before.

The fact that they look to their representatives for leadership around that level of trust and openness and instead see a culture of secrecy and opaqueness is tremendously disconcerting to people who want to believe in our democratic processes. Therefore, when we talk a lot about the trust that people need to have in government, I understand, but the basic element we need to see more of is a government that demonstrates trust in the people.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide the government's response to Bill C-613, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act and the Access to Information Act (transparency).

For many reasons, the government cannot support this bill, not least of which is because it includes a number of problematic amendments.

The proposed changes to the Access to Information Act, for example, would increase the required administration involved, and seldom does an increase in administration result in decreased costs or efficiencies to taxpayers. Our current system includes an independent Information Commissioner who reports directly to Parliament and who already has a strong mandate to investigate and resolve disputes concerning access requests.

This system has a very broad reach and includes nearly 200 federal institutions, including crown corporations like the CBC and Canada Post, and government funded foundations like the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

[*Translation*]

In 2012-13 alone, the system released nearly six million pages of information to Canadians, which is an increase of over a million and a half pages over the preceding year. During that same year, the government received and responded to nearly 54,000 access requests, which is more than in previous years.

This proves that Canada's access to information system is working well.

[*English*]

Under our Conservative government, Canadians are accessing more information from the government than ever before.

[*Translation*]

That is something all Canadians can be proud of.

The government is determined to ensure that Canadians continue to have access to government information and documents of all kinds. The government recognizes that accountability and transparency are an ongoing process.

• (1805)

[*English*]

We acknowledge that Canadians expect a high level of openness in government. We also understand that they expect to have more opportunities to participate in public affairs, particularly through the use of new and emerging technologies.

The government is committed to meeting these high expectations of Canadians, which is why we have continued to explore and implement new ways of giving Canadians access to government information. This includes our popular open data portal at data.gc.ca. This portal provides government data in machine-readable formats to enable citizens, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations the ability to leverage it in new, innovative, and value-added ways.

Our efforts also include the many measures we have taken to proactively disclose financial and human resources records of government institutions to the public. These include the disclosure of travel and hospitality expenses for selected government officials, contracts over \$10,000, for instance, and the awarding of grants and contributions over \$25,000, all of which can be found easily online.

By making this information readily available on departmental websites, Canadians and Parliament are better able to hold the government and public sector officials to account.

[*Translation*]

In short, we will continue to improve transparency and openness within government, but we will not do so by supporting the bill before us today.

[*English*]

The changes proposed by the member for Papineau ring hollow. After all, it was this member who accepted speaking fees from unions and then voted against union transparency legislation. It is also the member for Papineau who promises to repeal the First Nations Financial Transparency Act.

Recently, Barb Cote, a member of the Shuswap First Nations, thanked our government, stating:

The First Nations Transparency Act came in, and it actually showed what the previous council was doing—spending all our money on places that were not for the people.

This is the legislation that the member for Papineau will replace.

These, I would say, are not the actions of a champion of transparency.

The proposed changes in this legislation would lead to increased delays in response times to access for information requests and add cost pressures on government institutions.

As it stands, institutions are already required to document their deliberations and decisions on each request received under the act. Under our government, institutions are required to provide a detailed explanation every time they apply an exemption under the Access to Information Act. If requesters are not satisfied with the application of any exemptions, they may file a complaint with the Information Commissioner of Canada, who will examine the matter in detail. Also requiring the provision of detailed explanations every time an exemption is applied would add an unnecessary burden on the entire access to information program across the government.

Private Members' Business

The bill would also amend the Access to Information Act to eliminate all fees for access requests, except for the \$5 application fee. This change would not show respect for the tax dollars of Canadians. As we all know, some individual access requests carry a large cost, given the high volume of records involved and the hours required to respond, so the government has the authority under the access to information regulations to charge an extra fee to reflect these costs. The government feels that it is quite reasonable to require a minor additional fee to process requests that consist of thousands of pages of material. I would add that federal institutions take a fair and judicious approach to charging these fees. This includes waiving or eliminating them. The vast majority of requests are fulfilled at no direct cost beyond the initial \$5 application fee. In 2012-13, for example, this was the case for 99.5% of all cases. Again, 99.5% of these requests required no additional fee.

This legislation would also expand the mandate of the Information Commissioner to include the power to order the release of information. This would fundamentally change the role of the Information Commissioner, whose office would then become a quasi-judicial body. This would be in addition to the Information Commissioner's current role as an ombudsperson, which works well given her strong powers to investigate and resolve disputes about access requests.

I would also note what former information commissioner John Reid had to say on this question. He told a parliamentary committee in 2005 the following:

There is no evidence that order powers would strengthen the right of access, speed up the process, or reduce the amount of secrecy. The experience of 22 years is that the ombudsman model works very well. Fewer than 1% of complaints end up before the courts.

That said, it would be much better to continue with the present situation where the commissioner can apply to the Federal Court when an institution refuses to follow one of her recommendations to release some records.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

I would just like to talk about one last change proposed in this bill: the requirement for a parliamentary committee to review the Access to Information Act every five years. I just want to say that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics is responsible for carrying out such reviews and reporting its findings. The committee has actually carried out 15 studies on access to information since 2006.

[*English*]

From a careful reading of this private member's bill, I see more costs and more administration being added to government. I also see the potential for more litigation and disagreement, which in turn would add costs and further slow the process.

I do welcome the proposal by the member for Papineau to improve the transparency of the Board of Internal Economy. However, as stated by the Clerk of the House and former Speakers, there will always be a need for the board to meet in camera.

I would therefore encourage all members of this place to join me in opposing Bill C-613.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a great honour to rise in the House to represent the people of Timmins—James Bay, but I also have to say that it is not an honour to participate night after night, day after day, in the Potemkin democracy of what we have become.

As part of the farce that we have in the House, we all stand up and call each other “the hon. member” this and “the hon. member” that. We have learned that it is very unparliamentary to say that anyone lies. I cannot do that, Mr. Speaker, as you would be outraged. However, it is perfectly acceptable to lie in the House. It just has to be said that something is government opinion and that it was how it was stated. We cannot call that out. That somehow is considered parliamentary, because it is based on a gentleman's code here. Of course, that is an old-fashioned, sexist term, but we do not actually have rules except those that are in place for the officers of Parliament, whose job it is to hold us to account. With the Conservative government, we see a concerted attack on the credibility of the officers of Parliament. They will stand up in the House and tell us how the Conservatives all care about access to information. It is a farce.

Canada was a world leader in access to information. Year after year under the Conservative government, we fall further and further behind. Guess where we are now? We are about number 56, which puts Honduras and Russia ahead of us. The Conservatives stand up here and talk about fighting for democracy, but when we have corrupt countries like Honduras, Nigeria, and Russia serving their citizens' access to information requests better than the Conservative government does, we know where we stand.

We then get the President of the Treasury Board, who is like a flim-flam artist at a country fair, saying “I am going to give you the big prize. Put your money down.” The big prize is a booby prize. It is data sets. It is open government. What was the great line that I heard? It was in “machine-readable formats”. My God. What the heck is a machine-readable format? Do we know that is? It is junk. What the Conservatives do is to give people junk, and meanwhile suppressing the evidence that counts.

The information that people need is about who made decisions, why the decisions were made, and who was in the room when the decisions were made. However, we know that ministers' offices are black holes of accountability. The Information Commissioner has spoken out on that time and time again, but it is not just that they have a black hole of accountability; they have set out to fully monkey-wrench the Information Commissioner, just like the ridiculous member for York Centre and his witch hunt against parliamentary officers for their supposed partisan activities.

What we have now is the Information Commissioner writing to the President of the Treasury Board, the man who I said earlier was like a flim-flam artist at a country fair. She is saying that without the proper funding, she is not going to be able to fulfill her mandate. That is what the Information Commissioner is telling us. There is a fundamental problem. The reason she does not have the funding to do her job is because she does not have the order-making powers. If she had the order-making powers, she would not have to go to court all the time.

Private Members' Business

I see my Conservative friends stand up and say, "Oh my God, order-making powers. That is a very bad thing." It is so bad that it was the number one promise in the Conservative election commitment in 2006 with regard to accountability. They said that they would give the Information Commissioner the power to release the order of information, and they lied to the Canadian people. They stood up on the issue of access to information and promised that they would reform the system. Instead, they sit there and fall on the backbenches, happily carrying on this farce that we are somehow an accountable democracy, when the access to information officer is telling us that the system is broken.

What does this mean? The fundamental principle of an accountable democracy is maximum privacy for citizens and maximum accountability and transparency by government. These guys flip it upside down: they want maximum transparency of their political enemies.

When we hear the Conservatives talk about accountability and access to information, we never hear them talk about their corrupt lobbyist insiders and friends. No, it is their big bad trio, including the corrupt Indian chiefs, they talk about. We heard that tonight, with their going after the first nations. The big bad union bosses are number two. Let us go after them, they say. Number three is the radical environmentalists. The Conservatives use the Canada Revenue Agency now, in a total corruption of government operations, to go after bird watchers because they threaten the interests of the tar sands. Meanwhile, their pals are getting away with whatever they want.

• (1815)

The Conservatives' idea of accountability is accountability toward their political enemies. That is what they do. They use the levers of government, misrepresent the use of Parliament and undermine the officers of Parliament. They go after people who are environmentalists, they go after first nation people and use them as the big bogeymen, the bad chiefs, and they go after people in organized labour.

Meanwhile, the issue we are dealing with is the fact that they are suppressing information. There has been political interference. People will die of old age before they ever get any documents out of the government because it just keeps putting it off. The Conservatives think it is all funny until they are defeated by the Canadian people. It is a fundamental issue of arrogance and laziness.

Access to information should not be a partisan issue. Access to information is about accountability to the Canadian people. The Conservatives say time and time again, "The Canadian people be damned." This is about protecting themselves, protecting their ministers.

I will give an example. When the Conservatives lost the financial information on a half a million Canadians, did they give a darn about that financial information? No. They were worried about an incompetent minister, so they suppressed the information. They sat on it.

The first thing we learn when data has been compromised is we have to alert people because they could be subject to cyberfraud. We hear the Conservatives talk about cyberfraud all the time. However,

they did not tell anybody because they were more concerned about protecting an incompetent minister. What we have along with this faux democracy are faux ministers. They are bobble heads. None of them take responsibility for what happens in their offices. They are protecting the decisions that are being made, that are being given to them in orders, and they are suppressing this information.

The Information Commissioner, a person who has enormous respect in our country, had to write to the Treasury Board president, the man who spent \$50 million in border infrastructure money on pork-barrel projects in his riding and said that he had no documentation. That is the man who is supposed to represent access to information.

He will talk about open government, data sets and machine-readable formats. This man took \$50 million from border infrastructure, blew it in his riding and said that he did not have a single document.

However, that was not true. The documents did exist. Under access to information, the Conservatives blocked the ability of the public to see those documents, however, we got those documents through the province and municipalities. We found out that the minister had come up with his own homemade forms. It was like the Muskoka minister saying to people to fill it out and they might get a free set of Muskoka steak knives at the end of it. If not, at least a sunken boat would be raised, they would get a lighthouse and a lake would built be in a place where there were a thousand lakes.

There used to be the day people who were that incompetent were fired. Not under the Conservatives. They get promoted if they can take that much money, if they can stand and tell Canadians they lost the paper, even though the papers exist everywhere in all those little municipalities and if they can get away with that. What does the Prime Minister think? He thinks that is the man he will put in charge of ensuring that all the other departments follow their paperwork. That is the man he picked, the Muskoka ShamWow salesman. Remember that? The guy did a television commercial selling cleaning products in China. This is their idea of how government is done.

When we talk about access to information, Canada was the world leader. Our parliamentary budget officers are the most respected people we have in our country, but the Conservatives attack them, ridicule them, and make farting jokes and laugh because they think it is funny. It is not funny. This is about the lifeblood of democracy.

The Conservatives can sit over there in their fake democracy and insult people, but the fact is they undermine the systems of accountability that hold them accountable. It is their corruption that Canadians are fed up with.

• (1820)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we need to look at this as an opportunity. Through the bill, we have a wonderful opportunity to send a very strong and powerful message to all Canadians. If we listened to our constituents on the issue of being open, transparent and accountable, if we consulted with them and put the bill before them, I truly believe the advice we would get from them would be that this bill was worthy of a yes vote. This is the type of legislation that could make a difference in a very real and tangible way on the issue of transparency and accountability.

Private Members' Business

When our leader presented the bill, he indicated it was a bill that would get the debate going, hoping that it would go to committee and that we would be open to ideas, thoughts and possible amendments. The initial response by the government was to deny. That is unfortunate.

If we read what the government member said, he referenced one aspect of the legislation. There was no comment on the Board of Internal Economy. We are talking about 2014, yet there is a law in place that says the board has to meet in camera. There is a need to change the law, yet the government's response was to ignore that aspect of the legislation. How would the Conservatives' constituents respond to that? Where is the government's need to listen to what good ideas come forward from the House of Commons?

This is not the first time we have seen an effort by the leader of the Liberal Party to bring forward an idea that has made a difference. We should remember proactive disclosure. I was sitting here when the leader brought forward the idea and sought unanimous consent of the House to move forward on proactive disclosure. The result was, no. There were parties in the House that did not want to go toward proactive disclosure. We persisted. The leader of the Liberal Party indicated that the Liberal caucus would have to abide by proactive disclosure. We were prepared to demonstrate leadership on this issue because we understood that Canadians' expectations were that much higher. We wanted to raise the bar. We wanted to show that we were prepared to be more transparent and accountable.

When we brought forward the proactive disclosure and the Liberal members acted on it, it was only a couple of months later that the Conservative Party joined in with us. I applaud them for recognizing a good idea. It took a few more months and ultimately an opposition day, but we were able to eventually gain support from the New Democratic Party. It is because of that building of consensus that we were able to pass a motion that ultimately led to change.

Everyone inside the chamber has the opportunity to vote for transparency and accountability. If we recognize the value of government data, then surely to goodness we recognize how important it is that the citizens of Canada have a right to gain that access. Bill C-613 would enable Canadians from coast to coast to coast more access, by default, to government data.

What is wrong with that? If the members have some ideas or have some concerns, at least they could vote for the bill to go to committee and raise it there. If they think they can improve upon the legislation, then they should bring forward amendments. I would suggest their constituents would agree with that thought.

● (1825)

What about the Board of Internal Economy? It would appear that we do have the support of at least two political entities on that issue. I am not sure where the government sits on it because the government member never commented on that aspect of the legislation.

Does the Conservative government or the PMO believe that we should still have a law in place in the year of 2014 that says we need to have in camera meetings, that it would be against the law to do anything otherwise?

I would like to think that if provided the opportunity to change that law, the government would recognize the benefits of it and allow for that to happen. I will be listening to future Conservative speakers who speak to the bill. I would challenge members to provide comment on that aspect also. Do members not see the value of it?

Going back to the access to information, it is very important to recognize that the Information Commissioner herself insists that the real improvements in the access to information system will only come from the modernization of the act, which is a long overdue step that is crucial to advancing the cause of transparency and accountability in Canada.

The leader of the Liberal Party indicated how long it has been since we have had real substantial changes. What we see in Bill C-163 is an opportunity for us to send a very strong message, and it is a part of the open Parliament plan that we have talked about for months now. It takes into consideration a number of bold, new initiatives that would make, and have made, a difference. This is just another step in the right direction that I believe Canadians would be very happy to see take place.

My concern is that, through the PMO or some selected members of the Conservative caucus, the Conservatives will not see the merits of the legislation before us. That would be most tragic, because, as I pointed out at the beginning of my comments, we need to recognize the importance of government data and the importance of Canadians having access to that necessary information, which is being stored within government data banks. There is a litany of reasons as to why this should take place.

The previous speaker talked about other countries. However, in recent years, Canada has not done well in terms of protecting the interests of access to information of government data. We continue to drop in the world ranking, and there is so much more we could do to improve upon that.

One of the most significant things we can do is vote in favour of this proposed legislation to go to committee. As it was indicated at the very beginning by my leader, we are in search of getting that all-party consensus. We were able to accomplish that on issues like proactive disclosure, and this is yet another step that would make a difference.

I challenge all members to read through the legislation to get a better understanding of the issue of the government data bank and having access to information. I challenge members to vote in favour of this bill going to committee so Canada can improve upon our access laws and end the law on in camera meetings of the Board of Internal Economy.

● (1830)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House to talk about the bill. It is this government that actually has led the way with openness and transparency since we were elected in 2006. It gives me a great opportunity, as I rise to speak on the bill, to talk about some of the initiatives this government is undertaking to make government more open and accountable to the people of this country.

Private Members' Business

We understand that Canada has always been a world leader with respect to openness. Our first laws with respect to access to information were enacted in 1983, and this government has brought forward a number of other initiatives since that time to make it even more open and accountable to Canadians.

When we talk about the bill, there are many reasons why I will be voting against this piece of legislation. Not the least of these has to be that I look at the sponsor of the bill and wonder if I can trust that what he has put down on paper is something he believes in and would actually undertake to bring forward if he ever had the chance to be on this side of the House.

We know that, when Liberals were in power, they never did any of the things that are talked about in the bill, but I look specifically at the credibility and look back at some of the issues that the member championed or refused to champion. We know that the member has accepted speaking fees from unions and then voted against the union accountability act. We know that this government brought in a financial accountability act, the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, which Canadians supported, which our first nation partners for the most part supported, because it opened what was a very secretive and closed dimension of our first nations funding.

We know the member for Papineau said, if he got the opportunity to be elected and sit on this side of the House, that he would remove that transparency that Canadians think is so important and that we on this side of the House also think is important. When I look at that, I wonder about the member's commitment to transparency.

I look also at some of the recent undertakings of the Liberal Party when it comes to openness. We know that the leader of the Liberal Party talked about nominations and said that the Liberals would have open and transparent nominations. That is a process that clearly is not being followed in the Liberal Party. We know that in Ottawa—Orléans there was a former contestant for the leadership, who ran against the current leader of the Liberal Party. His major crime is that he actually outsold the preferred candidate of the Liberal leader when it comes to memberships. He was probably going to win the nomination, so the commitment to openness and transparency did not last very long and it went out the door.

When I look at this legislation, I see it was announced last June, when the member talked about bringing the bill forward. The Liberal Party members said that over the summer months they would reach out to and talk to Canadians about it. What did they do? They talked to Canadians through their website. How did they do it through their website? On the website people could comment on the Liberal bill as long as, when they did so, they added their email, name, age, date of birth, language, and aboriginal ancestry. Once people added all of that information and sent it to the Liberal Party, then they could make a comment on whether they thought the bill was appropriate or suggest changes.

That is the type of outreach the Liberals did, and people probably received a fundraising letter right afterward. Therefore, when it comes to openness and transparency, I am little troubled by what the Liberal Party does and what it says.

● (1835)

In his speech, the member for Winnipeg North talked about proactive disclosure. He said the Liberals wanted to lead the way on proactive disclosure, but we know that the Liberals say one thing and do something completely different. We know that it was actually Conservative members and senators who provided proactive disclosure in a very timely fashion.

It was a rather awkward situation for the Liberal leader last June, when he introduced this bill and had a press conference about it. It was noticed by the reporters that the Liberals had, at that point, not provided proactive disclosure and identified their expenses. I will read a couple of things from the report. The Liberal House leader said that they were struggling with the work that was involved putting these expenses online. The Liberal House leader went on to say, "In my view, it's as timely as we can make it...".

The Liberals never said how quickly the expenses would be posted online. However, the last round posted for the final quarter of 2013 was made a month and a half after the disclosure. In this case, they were two and a half months late with the disclosure. This is another example of how the Liberals say one thing and do something completely different. They are all about openness and transparency, as long as no one asks them to prove that they are for openness and transparency.

We know that, in their time in office, the Liberals did just the opposite of what they constantly say. That is the Liberal hallmark. We know that. We know that the Liberals will say one thing. If they think the NDP is going to trouble them at the campaign, they will try to steal NDP ideas. They know we are constantly going to be bringing forward ideas, and I guess it is unfortunate for Canadians that the Liberals do not steal our ideas of putting money back into the pockets of hard-working Canadian taxpayers. We know they do not do that, because they tend to want to tax and spend more. We do just the opposite.

When we look at some of the things that the Conservative government has brought forward, we see that one of the first things was the accountability act. The accountability act brought in a number of things for openness and accountability. Some of these things, such as the Commissioner of Lobbying, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, and the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner, are all things we brought forward after 13 years of Liberal secrecy and mismanagement of a number of different files. That culminated in the sponsorship scandal, which rightly outraged Canadians. There was a culture of secrecy in the former Liberal government, and we put an end to that with our accountability act back in 2006.

There are a number of other things we have done. We championed proactive disclosure. Expenses are more available. Contracts are put online for people to see. There are a number of other different disclosure mechanisms. The President of the Treasury Board has provided an open government program, which allows people to access a number of different files and data sets of the government and to use them.

We understand that when we provide access to information, it is actually a positive thing. The reason it is positive is that it gives Canadians access to information. It gives them access to the information that will allow them to understand what the government is doing and why it is doing it. When we look at all the things the Conservative government has done, we can see that, when it comes to openness and accountability, it actually does what it says, unlike the Liberals, who time and time again have said one thing and done something different.

When I look at this bill and some of the changes that are being suggested for the Board of Internal Economy, I have no problem. However, there is a whole host of other things that are completely wrong about this bill and that Canadians would find offensive. When we look at how this bill was drafted and how the Liberals, and this particular Liberal leader, have fashioned this debate, we can only conclude that it is another cynical and really immature attempt to score cheap political points on something that is very serious.

When we compare it to what this government has done with respect to openness and transparency, we can see the difference between this side of the House and that side of the House. I think Canadians understand that this is the only government that will continue to protect them, their pocketbooks. The Conservatives will continue to make government open for all Canadians.

● (1840)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Resuming debate, there are four minutes left this evening for the hon. member for Victoria.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to rise on this important initiative in the spirit of non-partisan debate, which is something Canadians expect when we are talking about fundamental reform to our parliamentary institutions. We are talking about two things in this bill: reforms to the Board of Internal Economy and reforms to the Access to Information Act.

In the very short time I have, I am going to comment mostly on the second order of problems involving the Access to Information Act. I am delighted to see that this bill incorporates something that had been promised before by the government and not delivered, and that is the need for independent ability for a court to order the disclosure of records. That is the best part of this bill, and one that I strongly support.

Indeed, Bill C-567, introduced by my colleague from Winnipeg Centre, would have done just that. Perhaps members will agree with me how ironic that bill was, because it was an effort to simply and only address those things left out of the Conservative government's accountability promises. Members will recall that 52 measures were promised by the Conservatives to increase ethics and accountability of the government, and the first thing the Conservatives said they would do when elected was to strengthen the Access to Information Act. When it all came out, their famous Federal Accountability Act contained a grand total of one of the eight open-government measures that they promised in the Federal Accountability Act. What the member for Winnipeg Centre did was simply present those things the government said it would do but did not do.

Perhaps I, as a new member, was relatively naive. I thought that all we were doing was asking the government to do what it promised

in an election campaign. I am sad to report that the Conservatives spoke against that bill. However, at least one principle in this accountability legislation before us tonight was in that bill, which we completely and strongly endorse, and that is the ability for an information commissioner to order the disclosure of a record if it comes within the proper rules, even if the government wishes that not to occur.

An access bill, in any jurisdiction, must have three things: first, a statement of the right to openness, which is the default, as the member for Papineau noted; the second critical thing, a list of exceptions to that rule, which would be narrow, that being the intent at least; and third, the ability for an independent officer to be essentially the umpire in the game and say that government should not withhold a particular record, that it should be disclosed. Those are the guts of meaningful access legislation. This bill would do that, and that is one measure, therefore, that we would strongly support.

The Conservative government has made fun of legislation of this sort in the past, and that is wrong. Mr. Crosbie, who was the first justice minister to live under an access act, said that this is merely a tool for "mischief-makers" whose objective "in the vast majority of instances" is to embarrass political leaders and titillate the public. That is not an access to information act.

It is a quasi-constitutional requirement, according to the Supreme Court of Canada. It is part of our legislative regime to ensure that the Government of Canada is held to account. This bill would go some measure toward that. It needs to go a lot further, and we hope that, when we get it into committee, we can improve it for all Canadians.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

Pursuant to Standing Order 37, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Bill C-608 under private members' business.

* * *

NATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE ACT

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP) moved that Bill C-608, An Act respecting a National Day of the Midwife, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy today to speak to my Bill C-608, An Act respecting a National Day of the Midwife .

Introducing this bill in the House and having an opportunity to debate it this evening is a very great privilege for me. While it was I who introduced this important bill, many people worked to make it possible, and I would like to take a few minutes of the time allowed me in order to thank them.

Private Members' Business

First, I wish to thank my friend and colleague, the member for Parkdale—High Park. It is thanks to the work she did that we are able to talk in the House about establishing a National Day of the Midwife in Canada. Following numerous meetings with stakeholders and discussions with various parliamentarians, the member for Parkdale—High Park decided to introduce an initial version of Bill C-608 in the House of Commons during this Parliament. I thank her for trusting me to introduce a new version of the bill so that we can debate it as quickly as possible.

Over the weeks, many people I have had the good fortune to meet have shown their support for Bill C-608. I would first like to thank the Canadian Association of Midwives, which rallied its members in support of this important issue. My thanks to the current president, Emmanuelle Hebert, and the outgoing president, Joanna Nemrava, vice-president Katrina Kilroy, treasurer Jane Erdman, secretary Nathalie Pambrun, executive director Tonia Occhionero and the entire board of directors drawn from across Canada. A big thank you also goes to the president of the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Consortium, Kris Robinson.

It is thanks to their involvement and support that I was able to submit my bill to their members and, in so doing, learn more about the work midwives do on the front line. We had valuable and very instructive discussions, which only confirmed the need to move forward with the idea of a National Day of the Midwife.

I would also like to thank the Quebec group, Les sages-femmes du Québec, which also answered the call. Many thanks go to their president, Claudia Faille, and her board of directors and members. Their energy and enthusiasm about the bill encouraged me to press on and make sure that I had the necessary support to secure its passage.

I also spoke a number of times with Lysane Grégoire, executive director of a birthing agency in Laval called Mieux-Naitre. Lysane has been working for years to promote midwifery in Laval, through the numerous books she has co-written, the establishment of perinatal care, and the opening of a future birthing centre in Laval. I have had the good fortune to work with Lysane since I was elected, and I have to say that for me, it is a privilege to be able to count on her support.

Lastly, I would like to thank the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives. The support for this bill was essential in order for us to proceed. My thanks to Kerry Bebee, Ellen Blais, Evelyn Harney and all members of the NACM. The situation of aboriginal midwives is a very special one in Canada. I could not have gone ahead without their support, which is essential to this debate.

Why is it important to have a National Day of the Midwife in Canada, and why choose May 5 as the date? Our Parliament is changing, and it is gradually becoming increasingly representative of the population. In every party in the House, we now find young parents. Having given birth myself to a little girl just over 18 months ago, I can understand the importance of having a choice when deciding how to give birth to a child. I had the opportunity to go with my preferences and those of my spouse with regard to the monitoring of my pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and, in particular, the early weeks.

I think the key word here is “choice”. Choosing how we want to bring a child into the world should not be a privilege, but a fundamental right. Unfortunately, for too many women in this country, particularly those in aboriginal or remote communities, that right is all too often denied.

This is where the practice of midwifery comes into play. There are currently 1,300 practising midwives in Canada. While the number is growing yearly, midwives are finding it difficult to meet the need because of the growing demand for their services. Only 2% to 5% of women have access to the services of a midwife. Too many regions, such as Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Yukon offer little or no access to such services. However, midwives play a vital role within our health care system, with the comprehensive monitoring of maternity they provide.

The results are also there to see. There is no increase in risk when a woman is monitored by a certified midwife, and there are fewer caesareans. A number of Canadian studies have shown that women using the services of midwives are very satisfied with the overall experience.

● (1850)

Canadian midwives are recognized internationally for the quality of their work and for their expertise. Through various agencies, they are training new midwives around the world and helping many countries to achieve a substantial reduction in infant mortality. Midwives receive very rigorous training before they can practise. A number of bachelor-level programs are available in Vancouver, Toronto, Hamilton, The Pas and Trois-Rivières. There are also specific programs in aboriginal midwifery.

I would like to talk about the special situation of aboriginal midwives in Canada. For our first nations, it is essential to have access to midwives' services, particularly in the more remote regions. People living in large urban centres have little awareness of the situation, but women in such communities have to travel thousands of kilometres in order to give birth. They are separated from their people at a time when having them near is really important. I will quote what the NACM says on the subject:

[*English*]

Aboriginal communities across Canada have always had midwives. It has only been in the last 100 years that this practice has been taken away from communities. This occurred for a number of reasons, including colonialism and changes in the health care system in Canada.

As a result of losing midwifery, many women in rural and remote aboriginal communities are currently required to deliver their babies and to access care outside their communities. In many northern and remote settings, pregnant women have to leave their families and communities for many weeks, or even months, prior to giving birth. This means that many women often give birth without any family support.

[*Translation*]

The National Aboriginal Health Organization's 2008 report entitled *Celebrating Birth: Aboriginal Midwifery in Canada* provides a very accurate description of this occupation within aboriginal communities. In this report, Julie Wilson said:

It's really nice to see true citizens of our territory, babies that are born on our land. It really does give them a sense of connection to the land, to our people. So I think that's very important, being born here on our land.

She went on to say that an aboriginal midwife not only works in her community but is also chosen by her community. In addition to providing care, she also incorporates a lot of the traditional practices, ceremonies and medicine into her community. That service goes well beyond the birthing process. It is the very essence of community self-governance and a voice of hope when it comes to the health of first nations.

Carol Couchie said:

Birth is the fundamental ceremony of our tribes. It is the most sacred ceremony that we have. And it is innate in women's bodies. So nobody has to say a prayer, nobody has to smudge, nobody has to set out a rattle, or do anything. It just happens. So we have never lost it. It always happens, babies are always born, and women are always doing that, and they are caring for them. We don't have to get back birth because it has never left us, but we have to get back in control of that ceremony. We have handed over the control of that ceremony to other people, and it has to be brought back home to us.

Although midwifery services in remote aboriginal communities are growing, there are not nearly enough of them to meet existing needs. Access to health care is an ongoing challenge for remote rural communities. Many stakeholders have indicated the importance of returning birth to communities. The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada mentions just that in its report entitled *Returning Birth to Aboriginal, Rural and Remote Communities*, which indicates:

• (1855)

[English]

The support of the community is important, and women, community leaders and elders all need to be involved in promoting the return of birth to their communities. The advocacy and the promotion of holistic care and spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health will help to bring about normalization of giving birth in the community.

[Translation]

We should also note that having access to midwives in their own communities is not only efficient, but also a financially sound idea for the government. Women in isolated communities must travel by airplane and be housed and fed somewhere else for several weeks, or even months. This is a huge cost to the government every year. A study of the pilot projects involving midwives in Quebec between 1994 and 1999 showed that complete care cost as little as \$2,000 to \$3,000.

That is a substantial difference, and the government could save millions of dollars per year by investing in the services of midwives in rural, isolated communities and first nations communities.

We must consider the health of our rural, isolated communities, where the reality is often very different from ours. Recognizing midwifery as a profession would be an important benefit for those communities.

I would like to explain why we should choose the date of May 5. May 5 is recognized as the International Day of the Midwife by dozens of countries around the world. Recognizing it here in Canada would emphasize the importance of our midwives and their networks everywhere in our nation, in all provinces and territories.

Private Members' Business

Finally, I thank all the members of Parliament and all the groups that support this bill. I sincerely hope that the House will move forward with Bill C-608, An Act respecting a National Day of the Midwife, so that we can recognize the valuable work done by the midwives of Canada.

[English]

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Alfred-Pellan shared some very interesting information regarding some of the provinces, including my province of New Brunswick, in which midwives are not very well represented. The question I have for her is about this recognition process and some of the good work that midwives do in various rural and remote communities.

Can she share with the House what enacting this day would mean for increasing the number of midwives? Would such recognition grow service by midwives in Canada, and potentially in rural communities and areas like New Brunswick?

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

New Brunswick, in fact, unfortunately does not have enough midwifery services. Truthfully, there are practically none at the moment.

As I have come to know the various groups of midwives and met many of their members, I have seen that they are working very hard to have their profession recognized everywhere in Canada, in all provinces and territories.

Thus, let us ensure that all women across the country have access to the services of a midwife if they so desire. Not every woman wants to have a midwife's care, but it is very important to provide it to all those who want it.

The National Day of the Midwife in Canada could change things greatly for midwives. For one thing, as parliamentarians we would recognize that profession and the important place these women occupy in our lives. We would also be recognizing the importance of blood ties in rural or isolated communities, especially when birth is becoming a less-natural phenomenon, despite its importance to us.

Indeed, I feel strongly about this important bill, but so do hundreds and thousands of midwives all across the country.

• (1900)

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Alfred-Pellan for her valuable bill, Bill C-608, which is about raising public awareness about the contribution midwives make to the health of mothers, newborns and infants. Only 2% to 5% of Canadian women have access to midwifery services.

Could my colleague explain why so few Canadians have access to these services?

Private Members' Business

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert for her question. She was right to talk about the contribution made by midwives.

Why do only 2% to 5% of Canadian women have access to midwifery services? It is because there are not enough midwives. It is as simple as that. Unfortunately, that is the case across the country.

I would like to share a bit about my experience. As soon as I found out I was pregnant, I had to decide if I wanted to use a midwife. If I had not made the decision right away, I would have lost my chance and would not have had the option.

There are not enough midwives in the country right now. Of course, more are always being trained and there is hope that their numbers will continue to grow, along with the necessary resources. Establishing a national day of the midwife would help midwives in that fight, which sadly has only just begun.

Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member.

[*English*]

Maternal, newborn, and child health remains a top international development priority for our government. We are committed to working with Canadian and international partners towards the goal of ending the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns, and young children.

I would like to highlight that our government is ensuring that moms in Canada get the support they need. Each and every year we invest \$27 million in the Canada prenatal nutrition program, an important initiative that seeks to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women, new mothers, and babies. It provides 59,000 new moms in over 2,000 communities with important nutritional and health information across Canada. We also provide over \$2.4 billion each and every year for aboriginal health, including access to midwife services and prenatal care.

Through Canada's leadership, global attention has been drawn to this issue. In June 2010, under our Prime Minister's leadership, the G8 launched the Muskoka initiative on maternal, newborn, and child health with the aim of saving the lives of mothers, newborns, and children. As part of this initiative, Canada committed \$2.85 billion between 2010 and 2015 to help women and children in the world's poorest countries.

Midwifery training and service provision is also a key component of our government's support through the G8 Muskoka initiative.

For example, through the strengthening midwifery services in South Sudan project, we are providing support to train midwives and other health workers at four national health training institutes across the country. A total of 540 health workers are expected to graduate during the project, including 315 midwives.

Maternal mortality is estimated at 2,000 for every 100,000 live births in South Sudan. The midwives Canada is helping to train will be vital in reducing maternal and infant mortality. More than 20,000 babies are expected to be born in the hands of a midwife or a midwifery student over the course of this particular project.

Another example points to Afghanistan, which currently has one of the highest levels of maternal mortality in the world. In addition to all of the other challenges faced by women in Afghanistan, 50 women die every day in Afghanistan from complications related to pregnancy. Dedicated delivery or examination rooms are scarce, and trained health care professionals can be hard to find.

I am pleased to say that we are working in partnership with the Afghan government, the United Nations, and non-governmental organization partners to train midwives and establish 49 family health houses in the province of Daikundi. Each family health house has a delivery room and an examination room in which a trained community midwife can safely work. Midwives in these communities will be trained not only to provide maternal and essential newborn care services but also important health information and immunization services. These centres will be equipped to provide health care services for up to 4,000 people.

Our government has also supported a project to reconstruct Haiti's national school of midwifery and local maternity clinics. Each new maternity clinic has two certified midwives and aims to provide increased access to qualified, preventative, and basic emergency obstetric and neonatal services to approximately 230,000 women and girls affected by the earthquake, including 25,000 pregnant women.

Finally, as part of its commitment to the Muskoka initiative for maternal, newborn, and child health, Canada has partnered with UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Population Fund in support of the project for accelerating the reduction of maternal and newborn mortality, a five-year, \$21 million initiative. This project has assisted 15 Nigerian states and the federal capital territory to strengthen the delivery of key maternal, newborn, and child health services. It seeks to ensure that health workers have the skills, equipment, supplies, and medicines to provide care.

Since 2010, the project has achieved impressive results, including the training of 248 nurse-midwives to provide life-saving care to an estimated 100,000 pregnant women, and 280 community health extension workers have also been trained and equipped to provide community-based newborn care.

● (1905)

These are but a few of the numerous examples of the work that Canada is undertaking internationally.

Thanks in large part to the Muskoka initiative in 2010 and subsequent global action, maternal mortality rates are declining and millions more children are celebrating their fifth birthdays. Access to health care and nutrition is up, and millions of lives continue to be saved each and every year.

This important work will continue. This government will seek continued progress toward ensuring that the nearly 40 million women internationally who give birth without trained help receive skilled care, decreasing the risk of death and disability both to the mother and the newborn. In May of 2014, the Prime Minister hosted the Saving Every Woman, Every Child: Within Arm's Reach summit. At the summit, Canada committed \$3.5 billion in support for the period of 2015 to 2020 and renewed global momentum to advance maternal, newborn, and child health as a global priority beyond 2015. Canada will continue to work with its country partners to fill system gaps by investing in improved service delivery at the local level, training more health workers, and increasing access to adequately equipped local health facilities.

Since 1991, the International Day of the Midwife has been recognized on May 5 by organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization to raise awareness of the importance of the role midwives play and the care they provide. Our government believes that all mothers, newborns, and children in Canada or anywhere in the world have the right to be healthy and safe. The declaration of a national day of the midwife would further demonstrate Canada's commitment to maternal care on the international stage. I would like to offer our government's support for Bill C-608, which would increase awareness of the contributions that midwives make in improving the health and well-being of women and their families, both domestically and internationally. I am pleased to support this initiative.

A national day of the midwife will certainly help to increase awareness of the value of this important profession in providing maternal care services to women and their families, both domestically and internationally. Our government will support Bill C-608, which seeks to designate May 5 each and every year as the national day of the midwife.

• (1910)

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-608 designates May 5 each year as a national day of the midwife. I rise to support this bill.

However, I want to make a side comment. We seem to be debating more and more bills that recognize a particular day for a profession or a cause. While these are all very useful in bringing awareness and importance to the cause, I hope we are not in danger of watering down the effect by having a day for everything. Sooner or later we will not pay attention to the days anymore.

This is an important issue, though. I believe this bill is important in recognizing the role of the midwife as part of a health care team in low-risk deliveries. In fact, we now know that most low-risk deliveries should be delivered by a primary care provider. In some areas that could include a midwife and in other areas it could include a nurse practitioner trained in midwifery. In others it could be a family physician who is trained in midwifery.

Midwifery is a way of providing quality, timely, cost-effective, patient-centred care, and I want to stress more than anything else the use of these primary care providers in terms of low-risk deliveries.

Women with high-risk pregnancies obviously should be handled in a hospital setting by an obstetrician, but in Canada more and more people with low-risk pregnancies are going directly to obstetricians.

Private Members' Business

This increases the cost of care, and it does not give the quality of care and the continuity of care that a primary care provider such as a nurse practitioner, a family physician, or a midwife can provide to a patient.

Midwives play an essential role in promoting health and reducing maternal and infant mortality globally. Members have heard from my colleague from the Conservatives speak to that point just now. In fact, midwives are expert primary care providers in low-risk pregnancies and births and can optimize the childbirth experience for women at all risk levels.

It may be useful, however, to look at home birth statistics in Canada.

A lot of midwives I know prefer home birth and promote home birth. In some hospitals in some parts of Canada, they are an essential part of a team within the hospital setting.

Midwives performed 2,360 home births in 2008, which is an increase in home births of 25% in only five years. There are no national home birth statistics, but the percentage of non-hospital births in Canada more than tripled between 1991 and 2007. This increase coincides with the sudden rise in use of midwives within a low-risk birth experience.

Healthy women who are pregnant, however—and this is just me speaking as a physician—should always know that there is a 40% chance during actual birthing of having some kind of high-risk intervention necessary. In very large busy cities, it is often difficult at that point to get a person who has a complication from home to a hospital setting to deliver safely.

According to the chief of maternal-fetal medicine at Toronto's Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, women must therefore look carefully at home births as an option.

However, in countries with very high infant and maternal mortality rates where there is no basic health system in place, a midwife, and in some cases not even a fully qualified midwife, is an option in some faraway villages to have somebody with some training, no matter how small, available to provide a birthing at home. In the rainy season in many developing countries, a passable road cannot be found to get to a birthing centre that has all of the equipment.

Midwives have had a huge role in bringing down infant and maternal mortality, globally and especially in the developing world. Here in Canada, home births account for approximately 2% of all births in Canada, the U.S., and most western European countries, with the exception of the Netherlands, where home births account for one-third of all births.

Private Members' Business

I think it is appropriate to say that in Canada we only have midwives registered in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and the Northwest Territories. It might be interesting for other provinces to look at the role of the midwife as part of a primary care team in low-risk pregnancy and delivery.

There are currently seven midwifery education programs available in Canada. The program is a four-year baccalaureate program.

● (1915)

Midwives are and should become a larger part of health-care systems not only here in Canada but around the world.

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of births attended by midwives in the United States rose by 41%. Bangladesh, one of the few countries that have actually met millennium goals four and five on infant and maternal mortality and morbidity, actually committed to training an additional 3,000 midwives to reach the millennium goals, which is an extraordinary thing to happen.

Afghanistan has committed to increasing the number of midwives from 2,400 to 4,500 in a short period of time. Ethiopia has committed to increasing the number of midwives from 2,000 to 8,000. Rwanda has committed to training five times more midwives, which increases the ratio, sadly, from one to 100,000 to one to 20,000. It would be really nice to have a better ratio. In some of these countries, the ability of midwives to train to deliver babies is a core and essential part of looking at mortality and morbidity during pregnancy and childhood.

In 2010, the global strategy for women and children's health noted that an additional 3.5 million health workers, and that includes midwives, are required to improve the health of women and children substantially in the 49 lowest-income countries. The World Health Organization recommends one skilled birth attendant for every 175 pregnant women. I refer back to the fact that Rwanda is moving from one for 100,000 women to one for 20,000, when we know that the ideal ratio is one for 175.

There is much work to be done in looking at the role of midwives, not only in the developing world and not only globally but here in Canada and in some of our isolated areas.

I want to thank the member for bringing this issue forward. The more Canadians understand midwives and what they do and we look at better community care models of care, we will see midwives playing an essential role in that compendium of care and in that comprehensive list of caregivers.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, all over the world maternal mortality has decreased by 50% in the past two decades. According to the World Health Organization, the WHO, the number of midwives grew by 15% over the same period, and two out of three births in the world are now attended by a qualified health professional.

Access to good-quality health care is a basic human right. However, every year nearly 40 million women give birth without a qualified attendant, which increases the risks of mortality and morbidity for both the mother and child.

Midwives do more than birth babies. A midwife is a trained health professional who takes complete responsibility for care and services for the mother and the infant during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. Midwifery plays an important role in society, and the bill introduced by the hon. member for Alfred-Pellan will raise public awareness of the contribution midwives make to the care and well-being of mothers, newborns and infants.

At present, only 2% to 5% of Canadian women have access to midwifery services. That means two things. First, it means that few Canadian women are aware of the existence of such a sexual and reproductive health service. Second, it means that Canadian women cannot have access to a midwife when they want to have such a person by their side throughout their pregnancy. There are 1,300 midwives in Canada, 136 of them in Quebec and 11 in Montérégie, where my riding is. That is not enough.

We must encourage the practice of this profession and the use of midwifery services, especially because we know that this Conservative government's budget cuts are putting more pressure on hospitals and that the same cuts are causing health care centres in our ridings to close. In my riding, in Saint-Bruno, two clinics have closed in three months, and a third is in critical condition.

The Conservative government is doing nothing to help improve and maintain good health care for the people of this country. The people do not know how to face such shortages. Soon there will be no clinic. It is a scandal. If, by encouraging the use of midwifery services, we can offer young mothers an alternative for their reproductive health, the government ought to support the creation of a national day of the midwife.

The International Day of the Midwife was first celebrated in 1991 and is sponsored by the WHO. Now, more than 50 countries celebrate this day. Here in the House, members help mark the day during members' statements. Why not go farther and make it a national day? It is not enough to honour the birth attendants who work all over the world. It is time to recognize our Canadian midwives, all over the country.

● (1920)

This national day of the midwife would honour all the dedicated midwives who go beyond the minimum required of them, who work in difficult circumstances and with limited resources to provide maternal and neonatal health care to women and girls across Canada. We in the NDP are affirming our commitment to supporting midwives across the country, and I invite all members of the House to do the same by supporting Bill C-608, as introduced by the hon. member for Alfred-Pellan.

Private Members' Business

•(1925)

[English]

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed the debate so far this evening. I want to congratulate the member from Alfred-Pellan for introducing Bill C-608 and for the great speech she gave explaining her reasons for doing so.

It seems that I am the first male to stand to address this matter, so I want to say that I very much appreciate all of the contributions by the various women who have participated in the debate so far. However, as the token dad here, at least the first one on the male side of the House, to address the issue, I have to admit that I often say that children are a conspiracy to make their parents feel older. We live 25 or 30 years during which we feel we have not aged, and then our kids start pressing up into that area and the math does not work anymore.

My first child was born 38 years ago in Toronto at St. Michael's Hospital. It was completely natural childbirth. Amazingly, it seemed as if the medical staff, who did a fine job, had never actually seen a natural childbirth at that time.

My second one was born four years later in our own home. There was a medical doctor in attendance and a nurse who was trained as a midwife who did all the work. He just caught the baby. Childbirth is not a state of sickness for most women. It is a state of health if women have appropriate information, are well informed about the birthing process, and have someone nearby. Midwives have filled this role throughout history in most cultures.

It is very refreshing to see a move toward re-establishing midwifery in Canada. We can see from the comments made already why the need is really important. The health and well-being of pregnant women, infants, and children is of vital importance to our government. I am therefore pleased to support Bill C-608, which would increase awareness of the significant contributions of midwives to safeguarding and improving the health and well-being of women and their families.

The parliamentary secretary spoke just a few minutes ago about Canada's leadership in maternal and child health worldwide through the G20 initiative, helping to train and advance midwives in birth attendance in developing countries where maternal mortality is at alarming rates. Canada is acting to make a difference there.

Meanwhile, right here at home, midwives provide high quality care for women before, during and after childbirth. They ensure safe deliveries and provide essential newborn care. They are key primary care providers who seek to optimize the childbirth experience for women and families and work collaboratively with other health professionals. Having access to these skilled professionals to provide needed care for women, newborns, and families during the prenatal period, labour, birth, and postpartum is critical to their collective health and well-being.

Aside from the supports provided by our government enumerated by the parliamentary secretary a few moments ago, our government is also providing the largest health care transfers in Canadian history to provinces and territories to support health care services, such as midwives. These historic transfers have increased by almost 60%

since we formed government and are set to reach \$40 billion by the end of the decade.

Canada had 381,598 births registered last year. The overwhelming majority, 98.5%, took place in a hospital. In fact, child birth is the number one cause of hospital admission in Canada. I find that statistic astounding. Of 381,598 births, 98.5% actually took place in a hospital.

An hon. member: That's good.

Mr. James Lunney: Mr. Speaker, one of my colleagues said "That's good." Let me explain. He perhaps was not at the luncheon I attended today where the guest speaker was the head of the Canadian Medical Association, Dr. Chris Simpson.

Dr. Simpson made an excellent presentation, basically around a national strategy for seniors' care, something that I would personally be very pleased to support. However, the keynote part of his address was about what is an increasingly common phenomenon in hospitals, something they call "code gridlock". Code gridlock happens when the hospital is so jammed by people coming in that they have no room to admit new patients, and no room to move patients from an emergency ward up to another ward where their care would be more appropriate. They have no room to move people out of intensive care to other wards and there is no place to move patients to other institutions that might be able to handle a chronic care condition.

•(1930)

One hospital he mentioned set a record of seven weeks of gridlock. That backlog sabotaged the efficiency of the entire hospital.

The vast majority of childbirths are not high-risk childbirths. There are very good reasons for high-risk people to give birth in hospital, but the majority are low risk, and midwives can provide those services in a variety of settings. Many hospitals are providing birthing rooms that have low lighting, quiet music, and room for the dad to be there.

I experienced a home birth with my second child. I can tell members that for me and others who have experienced home births, being able to hold that baby in one's own home and for the siblings to hold that baby minutes after he or she is born is an experience that not only the parents will never forget but also neither the children and the siblings. There are other ways, and midwives are organizing in a variety of ways to see that women get the type of birth care they prefer. Some of those are water births.

Private Members' Business

I want to speak to something else that occurs in Canada. It is a disturbing trend that has been occurring for years because of hospitalization for a normal, natural process like childbirth for most women. Canada has one of the highest rates of caesarean sections in the world. I wonder why that is. Are Canadian women somehow inferior to other women? C-sections are a surgical intervention. The World Health Organization recommends maximum targets of 10% to 15%. In Canada it was 17% in 2010, and by 2010 it was 10% higher, at nearly 27%. In fiscal year 2011-12 in Ontario, it was nearly 29%, and some provinces and regions in the country were over 30%. There are legitimate reasons for the increased number of C-sections, including an older demographic, with women delaying childbirth in many cases; a trend toward more obesity, with many young mothers now more obese than they were 10 or 15 years ago; larger birthweight babies; and increasing fertility treatments, which lead to multiple births. Those all may be reasons why a C-section might be considered.

A low-risk, normal pregnancy and a vaginal birth should be encouraged, which is better for the mother and the baby. Some women may wonder how I know that. Statistics confirm, as will I am sure some of the others who have spoken here, including two who are physicians, that it is undeniable that having a C-section is a much higher risk than a vaginal birth for most women. They are also more expensive. The Canadian Institute for Health Information estimates that a C-section costs about \$4,600 compared to about \$2,800 for a vaginal birth.

Midwives can practise in a variety of settings. They can accommodate a variety of needs not only of what the mom wants but also the dad to make that experience much more meaningful and at a much more affordable cost. We do not know what the average cost is because it varies across the country, but I understand that it is somewhere between \$850 and above. That is very cost-effective compared to \$4,600 for a surgical intervention. I think at a time when we are facing a health care financial crisis because our health care system is simply not sustainable on the path we are on, we need to look at cost-effective ways of delivering service. This is not just about saving dollars, but about giving women the choices they want and making childbirth a normal and healthy thing for more women.

I want to thank the member for introducing a very thoughtful bill and one that I think would not only help contain costs but also help give women, children, and families a better birthing experience.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Alfred-Pellan now has five minutes for her reply.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this evening all I want to do is thank all of my colleagues in the House for their wonderful support for Bill C-608, An Act respecting a National Day of the Midwife.

I will not repeat what my colleagues have said, but I would first like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, who is a young mother on the Conservative side. I know how important this issue is to her.

I also want to thank the member for Vancouver Centre, who is always passionate about health issues. I also appreciate her support for Bill C-608.

I also want to thank my NDP colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, who is a doctor by training. I am very pleased to know that she supports us on this. I know that the national day of the midwife was also important to her.

I would like to thank my colleague on the Conservative side who just spoke, the member for Nanaimo—Alberni, the only man who spoke to this bill. I must say that his speech on his personal experience with midwives was extremely interesting.

I know that he did not make a speech, but I would also like to thank my Conservative colleague from Tobique—Mactaquac for talking about what was going on in New Brunswick and for showing how important it is for his community to have midwives.

I saw how important this issue was to everyone. We all have extremely different experiences, especially as parents. Our birthing experiences—as fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, sisters or cousins—are wonderful, and it is important to share these experiences with each other.

I thank my colleagues for their support for Bill C-608, An Act respecting a National Day of the Midwife.

Let us continue moving forward.

• (1935)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 19, 2014, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

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\$12 billion a year some estimates say, that would be realized by the free trade agreement between Canada and the European Union.

This opening for Canadian exporters would be accentuated by, as page three of the report notes, the fact that Canada would be the first large economy with free trade agreements with both the United States and the European Union. In fact, we would be the only major developed economy in the world with such access. For investors looking to build a facility to create jobs and to export both to the U.S.A. and Europe, Canada would be the one place to go in the developed economies if they were looking for a place to locate. This would be a major gain for Canada, the place for job creation and long-term prosperity. That being said about manufacturing and similar kinds of activities, let me return to agriculture, the subject of this report.

[*Translation*]

Our agri-food industry will benefit from an incredible opportunity and enjoy a leg up on its competitors around the world. It is no wonder that the committee recognized this and made a recommendation that states that approving the agreement quickly will expedite the economic benefits for Canada.

[*English*]

This free trade agreement, with our second-largest trading partner and the world's largest economy, represents the greatest single boost for the Canadian economy since the previous Conservative government reached a free trade agreement with the United States. What is more is that this free trade agreement with the European Union is historic in its reach. It is Canada's most ambitious trade initiative, broader in scope and deeper in ambition than the Canada–United States free trade agreement or the North American free trade agreement.

As ambitious as the negotiations with the EU were, our Conservative government continued to defend Canada's supply management system, and I am pleased to say that we succeeded in that aim. Under the Canada–Europe free trade agreement, the three pillars of our domestic supply management system would remain intact.

[*Translation*]

No only did we defend supply management, as the committee recommended in its report, but we also opened new trade markets for the products of these sectors.

[*English*]

Canadian dairy farmers would, for example, gain, through the agreement, unlimited access for their products on European shelves. The excellent balance we have achieved for Canada's agricultural sectors is a major component of what makes this free trade agreement the masterpiece it is for our economy's growth.

The benefits to be enjoyed by agricultural exporters will go a long way toward making free trade with Europe the great success that I know it will be. Farmers, and Canadians generally, recognize this free trade agreement for the success that it is and the opportunity it represents.

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[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

The House resumed from October 31 consideration of the motion.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, before I begin my address, I would like to advise you that I will be sharing my time with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture.

• (1940)

[*Translation*]

I am honoured to rise here this evening to take part in the debate on the first report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food regarding the free trade agreement between our government and the European Union, and specifically the effects it will have on the agriculture sector.

[*English*]

I want to thank the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé, the NDP's deputy agriculture critic, for moving this motion, letting the House have a chance to talk about our government's free trade agreement with the European Union. As I said on October 31, there is a lot of interest on our side of the House.

I also want to thank our agriculture committee for undertaking its study on the free trade agreement with the European Union and its impact on Canada's agricultural sector. The committee initiated this study last fall, after the agreement in principle was concluded in October 2013. As noted on page two of the report, the particulars of the final agreement were still being negotiated during the committee's study. However, after the committee's work wrapped up and its report was tabled, those negotiations were finally finished, and we now have a detailed legal text available for members and all Canadians to study and assess.

Before the last election, and during the midst of these trade negotiations, I had the great honour and privilege of serving as Canada's Minister of International Trade. In that role, I had the opportunity to meet with various Canadians, those with a real, tangible interest in getting a free trade agreement signed, sealed, and delivered. One segment of the Canadian economy that was among the keenest to see action was the agricultural sector.

I am pleased to say that our Conservative government has delivered. This free trade agreement would give new market access in Europe for key Canadian agricultural exports of beef, pork, and even bison. Specifically, there would be new duty-free access for up to 80,000 tons of pork, 65,000 tons of beef, and 3,000 tons of bison every year. I could go on, but suffice it to say that the agriculture industry estimates that the Canada–Europe free trade agreement would achieve over \$1.5 billion of new exports for Canadian farmers every single year. While that would be a vital boost for our economy, it is just one of the components of Canadian economic growth, over

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The general consensus, which now prevails, that free trade is a good thing emerged following the very exciting election of 1988, when Canadians were called to the ballot box over the issue. In the early 1980s, when I was in university, free trade was a very hot issue. The consensus of the media, academics, Liberals, and socialists was that free trade was a terrible thing and a bad thing for Canada. The debate that went on through those years culminated in that gripping election of 1988.

I remember that campaign well. Those of us at the time had become accustomed to campaigns being about music, who had the best song, or who had the best looking leader. It was the first election I remember in my lifetime so focused on policy, and in that particular case, on one issue, and in fact, where the debate went back and forth, as did the lead through the election. Of course, they were vigorous debates.

Over time, having been defeated in that election and having seen the tremendous benefits of free trade, the Liberals have come around to supporting free trade, but the New Democratic Party still, reliably, has opposed free trade bills. However, the consensus for free trade continues to grow, so much so that this year, we saw a very fascinating event: the NDP actually backing one of the many free trade agreements we have brought forward in bills. I bet my New Democratic classmates from a quarter-century ago would have laughed in my face had I told them that this would ever happen.

Of course, we are awaiting the NDP view on this agriculture committee report and on this free trade agreement, but we will soon hear from an NDP MP in this debate. Farmers and agricultural exporters are certainly waiting to hear.

In closing, I want to extend my thanks to my counterpart, the NDP House leader, because it is through his program of daily concurrence motions this autumn that MPs have this opportunity to speak and vote on the issues raised in this report and on the exciting trade agreement with the European Union, which the agriculture committee studied.

I personally take great pride in this. When I was trade minister, as I said, my number one priority was seeing progress on this. I am very pleased that my successor has brought it to a satisfactory conclusion, and I look forward tremendously to the benefits to all Canadians. With the people-to-people links we have between Europe and Canada, the opportunities are tremendous. I look forward to hearing what other members have to say, but more importantly, I look forward to all this free trade agreement will mean for the creation of growth, long-term prosperity, and jobs well into the future for our country.

• (1945)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the government House leader tried to point out, New Democrats have opposed some of the bad trade deals that have been brought forward in the past, and we have supported good ones, ones that have actually been fairly negotiated. That is no secret to the government House leader.

New Democrats are not knee-jerk free trade apologists. We take a balanced approach on trade, which means that we read through the information that is available to us. We read through the actual agreements. We read through the enabling legislation. We ask the

government tough questions about the kinds of transition measures it puts in place, and often, in the past, the government has simply come up empty-handed in terms of answering the tough questions we have asked.

We have seen growth in trade worldwide, and particularly, more and more, a fair trade agenda, where countries in South America and Europe, et cetera, have actually taken a different approach than the government in terms of trade structuring. They have actually put into place measures that are much more balanced.

My question for the government House leader is very simple. In terms of the Korea trade deal, the Conservatives actually got the investor state mechanisms right. Why do they not try to emulate some of the best trade measures that are taken by progressive countries around the world and have clarity and transparency around negotiations and real consultations with people who are affected, including Parliament?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, the negotiation of the Canada-European Union free trade agreement was one of the most fascinating ones for Canada because of the unprecedented extent of consultation and transparency. In fact, it was so transparent that people would look at the issues being discussed and claim that one side's negotiating position, because it was public, was already agreed to, which, of course, was never the case.

One of the things that was remarkable about those negotiations was that the provinces, which are critical to making it an agreement of such depth and breadth, were actually at the table as negotiating partners with a say on the issues that were of relevance to them. Every single provincial government was there advocating its case and every single province agreed that this agreement represented the best interests of the provincial economy and the economy of Canada as a whole. For a while, Newfoundland and Labrador held out, but in the end, it came to the table.

That is why this was a phenomenal agreement in how it was negotiated. I know that when I was trade minister, I was in numerous consultations, whether it was discussions with the interested sectors or discussions with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, for example, and all kinds of municipal groups. All the people who had interests were actively involved at every step, and I credit our negotiators for the tremendous work they did.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as one of the Liberals and socialists the minister tried to target in his remarks, which I did not think was a very fair comment, I am proud of being a Liberal, and I am proud of being seen as a little bit socialist from time to time.

The bill has several shortcomings. The previous speaker mentioned one, and that is that there really was no consultation, other than with the provinces, which were basically sworn to secrecy. I spoke to many of the negotiators. There was really no consultation on an actual text that we could see, even an early draft, to give the public some confidence in where the government was going and the ability to make some suggestions. The provinces are in a different position than ordinary citizens. I think that was a shortcoming.

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The problem now is that we are basically dealing with a package that is a fait accompli. It is a vote up or a vote down, rather than looking at some of the aspects of the agreement.

I have two questions. One question is on supply management, which has been compromised in this deal. I will give the government some credit. It did not undermine the principles, but it provided greater access, which will mean less market for Canadian producers. Can the government spokesman provide us with what the compensation would be for that industry? The Conservatives claimed that there would be some. What will that be?

Second, on investor state provisions, there are some concerns. What protections do Canadians have from the protection that is allowed under this agreement for investors who invest in this country so that if the government makes a policy change, we have to make a payment to them for future lost profits? That has already happened before. That takes away some of our sovereignty as a government in this country. What protections is the government putting in the bill to ensure that we are protecting future governments?

● (1950)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear my friend from the Liberal Party reveal that perhaps there is no unity in the Liberal Party after all. Perhaps there are some good old troopers still fighting for the Canadian nationalist ways of the 1960s and still resisting free trade. I am glad to hear that there is no unity in the Liberal Party and that there are still people who are opposed to free trade, because that makes me fondly remember those great debates, which I think were some of the greatest times in Canada. It was a time when Canadians had clear choices, as I think they will again in the future, and perhaps this agreement will provide that opportunity.

In terms of supply management, I would say that we have quite clearly defended it through free trade agreements with literally dozens and dozens of countries. At every step of the way, we have successfully defended the system of supply management.

In terms of the changes in the quotas that would be allowed into Canada at lower tariffs or tariff free, those changes actually reflect less than the projected growth in the market in Canada over the same period of time. Therefore, there should actually be no impact on the supply managed sector, and it should enjoy continued growth, thanks to supply management.

We made a commitment that in the unlikely event that they do not see continued success and they suffer a negative impact, we will protect them. It is a fairly significant level of protection that we do not see too many countries offer when they enter into free trade agreements. We have done that with the supply managed sectors, and we were proud to do that. However, we are confident that we will not ever have to pay it out, because we know that our supply managed sectors are so successful and continue to do very well. In fact, we have secured for them opportunities through access to markets in Europe through this agreement.

In terms of protecting investors, I think anyone who is a Canadian investor, anyone who is doing business abroad, understands the importance of that, because guess what? We have the best rule of law in the world for defending people's property rights, whether they are from this country or not, when they are doing business here.

We do not always enjoy peer reciprocity in these matters from other countries. In fact, Canadians normally find it risky to do business abroad. If we want Canadians to do business abroad, create job opportunities here, export more, invest elsewhere, and grow Canadian prosperity by opening up to the world, which is something Liberals used to believe in, but not this member apparently, then we also have to get them some measure of protection, the same kind of protection other countries get here in Canada, and that is what this agreement delivers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in favour of the report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

I would like to begin by pointing out that the committee conducted a thorough study of the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement, as well as the very positive economic impact it will have on Canada's agricultural sector.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food heard from many witnesses who painted a complete picture of agriculture in Canada and who said they welcome the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement, especially considering the new opportunities it will provide to our agriculture sector.

The committee presented the House with an exhaustive report on the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement that included five major recommendations.

My comments will touch on the second recommendation, which reads as follows:

...that the Government of Canada continue its strong defence of supply-management to promote sustained growth and profitability in the supply-managed sectors of the economy.

Canadian dairy and farm producers are innovative and supply consumers every day. These industries contribute over \$30 billion to the Canadian economy, in both rural and urban areas.

These industries also create thousands of jobs in Canada and help keep the economy strong and stable.

Supply management is vital to thousands of family farms in Canada, and it has served the interests of Canadian farmers, processors and consumers very well for more than 40 years. That is why the government continues to support the current supply management system.

However, the NDP did not even mention the issue of supply management in its 2011 election campaign. In fact, the NDP does not seem to know that agriculture and farmers are the main engines of the Canadian economy.

Yesterday, the NDP announced that it would again vote against the fundamental interests of producers, especially those of the Quebec producers they represent, by voting against Bill C-18, the Agricultural Growth Act, and the access it will provide to seed technologies.

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• (1955)

[*English*]

Our government supports supply management. We have always supported supply management, and we will continue to support supply management. At the same time, our government continues to pursue extensive international trade initiatives. This is vital to Canada's exporting farmers, who depend on trade and a strong Canadian economy.

Over the past nine years, we have concluded 10 free trade agreements that have facilitated trade with more than 40 countries. Our government has negotiated and signed these free trade agreements, all the while maintaining Canada's supply management system.

In fact in 2013, under our Conservative government, we reached over \$50 billion in export trade deals with our agriculture and food industry. A recent Farm Credit Canada report highlighted Canada's agricultural exports as accounting for 30% of GDP, the second largest contributor to Canada's economic growth.

It is clear that our free trade negotiations and our upholding of supply management benefit the economy and strengthen our agricultural industry. The opposition, however, has opposed almost every initiative we have brought forward to strengthen trade and increase Canadian exports.

The NDP members have even said that, if given the chance, they promise to repeal international trade agreements to which Canada is a party. Of course, they will never be given that chance.

Farmers across the country, particularly those in the Quebec NDP ridings, support free trade because it is good for agriculture, good for Canada, and good for our economy.

The comprehensive economic and trade agreement is the most ambitious trade agreement since the North American Free Trade Agreement. With these two free trade agreements, Canada would be one of the few countries in the world to have preferential access to the world's two largest economies. These economies account for approximately 800 million of the world's most affluent customers.

The Canada-EU trade agreement would allow Canadian exports to benefit from duty-free access into the EU market. This would make Canadian products more competitive and provide our exporters with a significant advantage over their competitors.

The Canada-EU trade agreement trade agreement has been welcomed by many in the agricultural industry. Wally Smith, president of the Dairy Farmers of Canada said:

We have some of the finest and best artisanal cheese in the world, without a doubt, and we can compete with anyone in the world....

The Grain Farmers of Ontario said:

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will benefit Ontario, and Canadian, corn, soybean, and wheat farmers.

Canada's beef industry has also welcomed this agreement:

Once ratified and implemented, CETA will provide new duty-free access for 64,950 tonnes of Canadian beef - 50,000 tonnes of which is new quota - totally[sic] nearly \$600 million annually.

The Canada-EU trade agreement is now signed, and stakeholders across Canada are delighted; yet the NDP still will not say if it agrees with stakeholders, even its own stakeholders, and supports this agreement as signed.

It is most regrettable, even shameful, when a political party does not even listen to its own stakeholders.

Mr. Jim Laws, executive director of the Canadian Meat Council, summed up the benefits best when he said:

CETA will result in higher incomes for farmers, increased competitiveness for processors, more job opportunities for workers, greater choice for consumers, and higher tax revenues for municipalities.

• (2000)

[*Translation*]

As a result of the government's consultations with many stakeholders across Canada, we know that farmers, dairy producers, provincial producers and associations, cheese producers and importers and the provincial governments may have concerns about the Canada-EU trade agreement.

The government will keep the promises it made to dairy farmers in the event that their productivity is negatively affected by the Canada-EU agreement.

As the Prime Minister said in October 2013, the federal government is firmly committed to closely monitoring the potential effects of the agreement. We could, if necessary, provide compensation if the agreement were detrimental to farmers.

Furthermore, under the terms of the Canada-EU trade agreement, Canada's supply management system will remain strong. The three pillars of the national supply management system—production control, import controls and price controls—are still in place and will remain in place.

[*English*]

Canadian farmers want to be competitive. Quebec farmers also want to be competitive. How would the NDP explain to the farmers in their ridings who are in favour of this agreement that they will not support the Canada-EU trade agreement?

Once again the NDP members are not listening to those they represent. They have pro-export and pro-trade stakeholders who want the NDP to support this agreement. The time is now for the NDP to listen to farmers, listen to their stakeholders, listen to their constituents, and vote in favour of the Canada-EU trade agreement.

Canadian farmers need a final answer from the NDP. Will it support the text of this trade agreement or not?

I have talked about how this agreement is supported by farmers and how supply management would remain intact with this agreement. We have discussed this at the agriculture committee and in this House, yet the NDP cannot make up its mind if it supports free trade and supply management.

I encourage all members of this House, particularly those of the NDP, to support this agreement and supply management.

That is why I move:

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That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "the First Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, presented to the House on Thursday, March 27, 2014, be not now concurred in but that, in view of the subsequent conclusion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and its final text having been published, the Report be referred back to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food with instruction that it amend the same so as to recommend that the Agreement represents an appropriate balance between creating opportunities for agricultural and food exporters and maintaining the system of supply management and, therefore, Canada's free trade agreement with the European Union should be implemented as negotiated."

● (2005)

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order. We will now have five minutes of questions and comments.

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Mr. Speaker, I look to you for direction first. Is the question directed at the motion or directed at the parliamentary secretary and his overview? I recognize you always give us leeway, but I want to be—

The Deputy Speaker: The debate henceforth will be on the amendment. Obviously given the nature of the amendment and the original motion, there is going to be a great deal of leeway in addressing comments to both the main motion and the amendment. The debate is on the amendment. The questions can be on either.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that my good friend the parliamentary secretary would want to revisit all of this.

The specific instruction says that one should vote for something at committee before it actually comes before the House of Commons, which is really quite strange. The hands of committee members would be bound by saying that they must vote for this that says one shall do this, but yet it is not here. There is no bill here, unless the House leader intends to bring one forward tomorrow that we do not know about. The CETA bill is not before us in the House, so how can it go back to the committee with an instruction that says thou shall go study it with the new pieces?

I agree with the parliamentary secretary that there are pieces we did not see before. As the House leader quite eloquently said, this committee report was written prior to all of the details coming out. The problem is that there is no legislation here from the government. If my memory serves me correctly, there is no agreement from the other parties across the Atlantic that they have accepted the whole thing yet, because a lot of countries have to vote on it and get it translated.

Could the parliamentary secretary tell me why the government would bind the hands of not only government members but the opposition as well, by saying that we must vote for this before we even know what we are voting for? Are we expected to agree on something, but we do not know what it is, because we really like it a lot or because the government likes it a lot? This reminds me of the leader of the third party, who jumped up and said he was in favour of it before he had actually read it.

If memory serves me right, the Conservative government always told us that we should not say things about things we do not yet know, and yet the government is asking us as a committee to vote in a way that will bind us. I am not sure how one binds oneself to a committee anyway. I suppose we could support the committee's

report. Does that mean the government whip would tell us how to vote when the government brings in CETA? I do not think so.

I am not quite sure why the parliamentary secretary would decide to do it in that direction. If he wants to bring it back for study, why not just bring it back as an open discussion? Surely that is what—

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Welland has exceeded his time by a long shot.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, you have been very generous with the member, but unfortunately he was very confused in his question.

The motion is about sending the report back to committee and having the report acknowledge the fact that the text from the agreement has been finalized and is now public and that the House should support both the free trade agreement and supply management.

Why did I bring this up? I brought it up because the NDP continues to equivocate. Those members have only supported a single free trade agreement among all the free trade agreements we have brought forward. We are asking them if they support CETA and all the benefits it would bring to Canadian agriculture or not. Let us see how they vote on this motion and how they vote on the final report at committee when the committee looks at what the House is sending back to it, encouraging it to recognize the fact that the final text has been negotiated and has been made public, and that the agreement actually advances the best interests of Canada, including agriculture, and it protects supply management.

● (2010)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Welland was making so much sense that I almost want to give him some of my time, but I will not.

The parliamentary secretary talked a lot about support for supply management. I guess it depends on how one defines support. Giving access to the Europeans to our market beyond what access we get into their market is not support. The fact of the matter is that our market will shrink, and it will have an impact on our "values" and on the available market for Canadian producers. That is the reality.

My other question for the parliamentary secretary relates to markets opening up in Europe for non-hormone fed beef. If that is the European policy then that is fine, but our problem is that we had a quota that we could access for beef before and we never filled that quota. In order to make this agreement work, is the government willing to invest in the kind of infrastructure that is needed, such as a plant in Canada that would slaughter and ship that kind of beef? We can do it, but we need a plant structure and infrastructure to access the European market. Would the government be there in that way for producers?

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Mr. Pierre Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, with regard to supply management, our government strongly defends it, as I mentioned. I would remind the member that it was our Conservative government, not the past Liberal government, that brought in cheese compositional standards to the great benefit of both consumers and supply management farmers.

I would also remind the member that we recently closed a loophole on the border concerning pizza kits. This was a top concern of dairy farmers. Again, our government acted on that issue.

I do not know why the member has no confidence in our dairy farmers or cheese producers. I will read another quote from Wally Smith, the president of the Dairy Farmers of Canada.

He said:

We have some of the finest and best artisanal cheese in the world, without a doubt, and we can compete with anyone in the world...

Why does the member undermine our dairy producers and cheese producers by saying that they cannot compete?

The last thing that I will say is about the beef market. This is a tremendous opportunity for beef farmers and for our beef processing plants. We work very closely with our stakeholders. We consult very closely. Industry is also interested in making this work, and industry has guaranteed us that it will make this work. It asked for extra access; it is getting extra access. It is new, exciting access for this sector, and it is going to exploit it to its full capacity.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the parliamentary secretary, I almost find myself almost at a loss for words. That is hard for the House to believe, and to be truthful, I think I can find my voice.

As the House leader quite correctly said in one of the few things he said that actually was correct, we did not have all of the details to study this matter. At committee we questioned why we were studying this when we did not even know what it was. We only knew that it was a CETA agreement and that we needed more details with respect to it so that we could pose questions to the folks who came before us from the agriculture sector. They included primary producers, processors, and the retail sector. There was a comprehensive number of witnesses, and I felt that there was a reasonable cross-section of folks who came before us to tell us what it was.

However, when we asked them specifically if they really knew what it was, the answer was that they thought so. Many had been at the table, but some had not. There was a sense that there might be some things they could win and that maybe there were not, but most said that overall they thought it was a good deal. The parliamentary secretary said that. The problem was whether they would be able to take advantage of those good things.

Unfortunately, one of the things missing in this report was the numbers. We talked about a nice big number—I think it was \$2.4 billion—which is the value of wheat exports being sent to the EU now in the agriculture sector, but there is no number in here as to what the EU sends to us in the agriculture sector, which is actually greater than \$2.4 billion. Even after we add in the numbers that the government talks about in this report—and the agriculture committee heard from different people—and add that number to the \$2.4 billion, it is still less than what the EU ships here, so it is not as if we

come out a winner over the EU. We can certainly say that we have come up, and there is no question about that. We have a cumulative number that is higher, and the EU got some extra stuff.

I agree with what my friend from Malpeque said when he talked about supply management. The government did not destroy the three pillars of supply management. Wally Smith, the president of the Dairy Farmers of Canada at that time, was quite clear about that. He said that it had not.

However, this is an overgrown mouse that is chewing away at supply management, especially the cheese section. That is what has happened, to the tune of millions of dollars.

My good friend, the deputy critic for agriculture for our party, comes from a great riding I can never pronounce because it always escapes me. I sit on the agriculture committee, and she does a wonderful job. It was quite clear in the motion that she presented to the House that we need to have some sort of transition plan for cheese producers.

If I remember, I think the government supported that idea. I do not think it has done much with it yet, but it did support it. It will be interesting to see what it does with that and if it actually works that through. It even agreed that there is an impact; otherwise, why would anyone support a motion for a transition program for a group of producers if we thought they were going to be winners? This government says it does not give away something for nothing, so it would not give money to farmers, or pretend to, if it did not think that somehow there was a loser.

That is what is in this agreement. That is what the report highlighted. That is why we added no dissenting report here. We added a supplementary piece because we heard from our friends in the agriculture sector, who said that there were opportunities for them.

As we have seen, there are opportunities there now. The Canadian Meat Council quite correctly pointed out that it has access now, but it does not use it, for a lot of legitimate reasons. The council says that additional access would enhance its ability to go ahead, and its members would probably take advantage of it.

However, if memory serves me right, that industry is looking for about \$100 million in transitional costs so that it can move those factories and processors so that they can ship to the EU. The reason is that the EU is looking for red meat that is different. It wants it to be hormone-free and probably without antibiotics, so the meat has to be treated differently when it is processed. Different things have to be dealt with.

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The problem ends up being the cost. Does the government intend to move that cost, or will the meat processors simply say that without the money, they will not do it? We do not know. The indirect benefits clearly are to those who say that they will feed those extra cattle, but that will happen only if the producers grow the extra cattle and send the meat down the chain.

● (2015)

In the committee report the barley producers talk about the net benefit to them. The problem is it is indirect, because they will not be selling barley to the EU. That is what the president of the Barley Council said. There is not really a big market for them to sell barley, because the EU has its own, but if we need another 500,000 head of cattle for that market, barley producers will be able to sell to the Canadian primary producers to raise that cap.

To go back to the beginning, if the processors do not develop a new line to take the cattle, then there are no cattle and there is no market for the barley producers. There is opportunity, but it is not a given. Unfortunately, my friend the parliamentary secretary always tells us that this will be so; well, it will not be so. It might be, but maybe not. We could point to other free trade agreements in which a lot of promises were made. Some of them happened.

It is not always the government's fault. We have to be truthful about that. If the opportunity is made available, someone has to take that opportunity. If they do not, then that is their choice. The issue is whether they can get all the things they want, and are we on a level playing field? It remains to be seen.

When we look at this situation, we see there are winners and losers. Some who came before the committee—and my friend did not talk about them—said they were not really sure if they are going to derive a benefit. Horticultural folks came before the committee and said they think they have some opportunities. They might have some winners, but they think they might have some losers too. Doing away with the tariffs is what it is about between the two, so they were wondering if the Dutch would dump all those red bell peppers on us, because right now they have a tariff. What happens if they decide to sell them in the horticultural sector? We will be swamped with bell peppers. We will be done. That is an impact no one in the government has talked about.

There is no transitional funding for the horticultural sector, by the way. At the moment the only reason there is one is that we moved a motion on this side to get Conservatives to talk about the cheese industry, and they finally accepted. There are none of those mitigating factors being taken into account.

On balance, it looks as though there could be opportunities, but perhaps not. No one is suggesting a free trade agreement in which one side wins and the other side loses. There has to be a balance. There is back-and-forth at the bargaining session. I know how it works. For 25 years I have looked across the table at folks trying to bargain collective agreements. We give something and we get something. That is how it works. In good agreements, on balance, we get what we need and they get what they need. When people go away from the table, they are never the happiest people in the world, but they feel they got a deal.

In this case, the EU will still have more agricultural product coming to this market than we will have going there, even when we add all of the new things that the government says will happen and, to be fair, what the ag sector believes it can win.

At the end of the day, we did not catch up, yet by all accounts we are a great agricultural country. We are great producers. We have great processors. We have great folks who market around the world and great products to sell. There are a multitude of things that we do extremely well, but we will still come up short compared to what will happen over there. We will still be in a position of going onto a playing field that we are not really sure is going to be equal.

After the committee adjourned, I had a discussion with one of our friends who appeared before it. He talked about GMOs. He said, "You know, we thought we were going to get that fixed in about four years." I asked when that was, and he said it was in 1993. He thought that by 1997 or 1998 at the latest, we and Europe would be finished with that issue.

However, he said that what he liked about this agreement was that they are going to get to talk about it.

I said, "Didn't you talk about it in 1993?" He said, "Yes." I said, "How are you making out?" and he said, "Well, we're not, yet." I asked him what makes this any different. He said, "Well, they said there will be an agreement on phytosanitary and all these things would get put to bed."

I have never heard the government say yet that it has an EU deal that says the EU will take GMOs from us. If there is such a deal, somebody can nod their head in the affirmative over there and correct me. Stand and tell me I have it wrong. If it is true that CETA says the EU will take GMOs tomorrow, please let me know, because I have never heard it. That is not changing.

● (2020)

Our folks were hoping it might, but it did not. What does that mean for producers? It means it is a market they cannot get to unless they change. That is their choice, and that is okay. They can choose to go in that direction or not.

However, as the government says, it is a market of 550 million people that those producers will give up on, so they have to figure out what they want to do. Do they want to look at someone else who would take that particular product?

I make no value judgments with this speech about a GMO product. That is the farmer's decision to use the product. The issue in growing that crop is entirely up to them. At the moment, the market does not take that particular product, so it eliminates it for them unless they switch. Maybe someone from the other side, during questions and comments, will tell me that somehow this is not true and I have it wrong. I will wait to hear if that is the case.

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Clearly, for us, we listened to farm groups, farmers and processors, right across the country, of which there were many. On balance, they said that the agreement looked like a good deal for their industry. However, there were some who said it was not necessarily a good deal for them.

We have heard about the supply side and it may not get what it thought it would get. My colleague from Malpeque introduced the sense of how it would be affected. Mr. Wally Smith said that the existing quota today would be 2.25% less after the agreement than before. If the market is not growing in Canada, because it is a closed market for them, and the quota shrinks by that amount, it impacts the ability of farmers and producers to make money, unless the Canadian milk market can swell, but it only grows at a certain level.

The New Democrats, and I am sure members on their side, would encourage folks that if they do not drink a lot of milk, they should. They should drink additional milk products and look for real milk products, not the pretend products, if they want to do things for farmers. It is really all about that.

This is an issue on the supply management side that makes it interesting.

The other part of it is that in my neck of the woods we have the wine industry. When representatives of the industry came before us, they said there was no impact on them. The fact is that wine basically comes into the EU anyway. There is no real import tariff on it. It is a minor amount and it has been reduced for the last number of years. It basically is not there anyway. Most of it is kind of a provincial piece as it is imported into what the taxation regime is. Those people have said that they needed help marketing themselves, because the Canadian wine industry is a small player internationally. Part of that is because we do not have a lot of cultivars in areas where they grow grapes. We have less of it in the ground than in the European nations. That is just the nature of it. Since we are physically smaller player, they said it did not really impact them. In a way there is a bit of an indirect piece that they need.

The representatives did say that the potential was there for them to import equipment in the wine industry. I have always found it unfortunate that we do not have a manufacturer. I am not suggesting the government is at fault for this because it is not. As somebody who grew up in Niagara, I have always wondered why there is not a machine company around the province that makes good wine making equipment for us, rather than having to buy it from Europe all the time. Every time we go to these places, the equipment is usually made in Italy or Germany. I wonder why we do not make it here. We have great machinists and machine operators, so why do we not make the stuff here for our home industry? Maybe that will be an indirect benefit, and it will be an industry that sprouts up. We never know, because it certainly would be one that would be welcome in Niagara, which is a great manufacturing place to be.

As we went through this, we decided we would add a supplementary piece to the agreement that talked about what we would like to have seen as well. We wanted to see that protection for dairy farmers, and we made that motion in the House.

● (2025)

The New Democrats want to thank the government for accepting and supporting the motion, but we also want to ask what it is going to do. We are looking for some action. The Conservatives always suggest that we are inactive about certain things, well we are looking for some action from the other side and it would be nice to see that happen. It is clearly something they have said.

My friend mentioned Mr. James Laws, who is the executive director of the Canadian Meat Council. He was concerned about reciprocity. The reciprocity is on something that is called parma ham or feta cheese. It is a geographical indicator. We gave the Europeans a whole whack of geographical indicators, a whole pile of GIs, but we did not get too many in the deal. They got 20-some odd, which really surprised me because I actually thought they would only get a handful. I thought we would be firm with them and not really allow them to have as many as they got. We got next to none and the one we actually tried to get was maple, which is really a traditional Canadian symbol.

We put a recommendation in our supplementary report, but the government did not answer our recommendations at the back. It answered the other recommendations. It was really surprising that the government would not say it was for maple.

When it gets close to winter when the leaves fall, they are maple leafs. I am not suggesting the hockey team. I am saying it is maple leafs that are falling. For all the Leafs fans out there, I hear they are doing better than normally. One would think that if we are going to protect anything in this country as an icon, it is the maple leaf and maple syrup.

Members of my family who live in Scotland know to buy real maple syrup that comes from Canada. In fact, when they come to visit, we ensure they get some to take home. They say they can buy syrup in Europe, but it is not the real maple syrup. The real syrup that we get in Canada is iconic to our country. I am surprised the government did not say it agreed with that recommendation the New Democrats made as part of our supplementary report.

Clearly, there are some issues that the government has not addressed.

The Canadian Meat Council talked about it when it comes to GIs. It asked where that reciprocity was, where that ability was for us to stand up and ask why the Europeans were given all the ones they wanted. We understand that Europeans want to hang on to these sorts of indicators, that they really like the fact that this comes from a certain region, and they have a real attachment to it, especially when it comes to food products.

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As much as we do not have quite the same attachment, one would have thought during bargaining we would have wanted to get something for that. If we were going to give them the GIs, why would we not then ensure they did not get as much cheese? Why did we not get something in return for that? That is what bargaining is about. It is about getting something for giving something. One does not just give stuff away for free. That is not bargaining, that is just giving up. For me, it was a real issue about not fighting to keep the things we need to keep.

On balance, I would be foolhardy to suggest that the folks who went before the agriculture committee did not say they felt there were opportunities here. Some felt there were very direct opportunities and could track it, but they were not really sure. There were some numbers used, some approximates, which were probably close to reality, but others were not. It really is quite often, as they say, not to pick on the pork industry, a bit of a pig in a poke, which is maybe it is and maybe it is not. One has to wait on those things.

Let me end by saying that the parliamentary secretary's amendment earlier I found strange at best, but then again I should never find anything coming from the other side too strange. There is this sense that the bill should be taken back to be re-studied with the additional information, which is actually a good piece. I do not know if subamendments can be made to these things, but I am not even going to try.

The bottom line is that now we have this additional information, maybe we should show the folks who went before the committee and ask them what they think. They may think it is better, they may think it is not so good. Giving an explicit instruction saying thou shall vote this way, means one really supports it. Let the Conservatives bring the bill to the House and then New Democrats will see if we want to support it.

● (2030)

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question, but let me just preface a few remarks before I ask the question. I want to remind the House and Canadians that CETA is good for Canadian farmers. We are talking about \$1.5 billion for the Canadian agricultural sector that would come about because of CETA. That is a new opportunity.

I would also like to highlight the fact that the NDP represents farmers in some of their ridings, but particularly in Quebec. When I look at Quebec what I see is a very strong and vibrant pork industry, beef industry and crop industry. Just in pork and beef, we are talking about a billion dollars worth of access into Europe because of the free trade agreement.

Now I will get to my question, because I know Quebec pork farmers, and certainly beef and crop farmers will be asking this question themselves. Having listened to my colleague, I could not tell if the NDP is planning to vote for the CETA trade agreement or not. He was saying on the one hand and then on the other hand, but if we go in the middle and go back to the other hand.

We need some clarity, which is why I put the amendment in front of the House in the first place. Everyone wants clarity, particularly farmers. Therefore, could the member clarify this for the House. Will the NDP vote in favour of the Canada-European trade agreement?

● (2035)

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer to clarity is, where is the bill? I am not sure what I can vote for and what I am supporting if I have never seen the bill. The Conservatives do not have one. I know I do not get to ask questions. The questions come this way. The bottom line is they do not have a bill. They have an agreement in principle and they have some additional new text that explains it, but they do not have a bill.

Therefore, if he asks me which way I will vote, it is like asking me if I have a scarf on my coat that is blue or orange. Why not guess. Then again, they may say one, but they may be wrong.

The bottom line is that if you have a bill, bring it out, get it on the floor. Let us have that debate, and you will find out how we will vote. That is what it is about. Put it on the floor. We would be happy to debate it and vote one way or the other.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would draw to the member's attention that questions and comments should be directed to the Chair, not to other members.

The hon. member for Malpeque.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member for Welland, but I agree with him that it would be kind of nice to see the fine print and details before voting. I am absolutely sure Canadians would not want us to vote on something and commit ourselves to something without seeing the details, especially from a government that Canadians know they cannot trust. We are certainly not going to do that. We want to see the details of the plan.

The member for Welland talked about the opportunities here, and I agree there are. The parliamentary secretary talked about the billion dollar market availability. He said it would be there, but he cannot say definitely it will be. There is a market there. Will we seize it? We might.

I am going to give a little history on trade agreements, and the government should listen to this. I have looked at many of them and when it comes to trade agreements after Canada signs them, whether it is us or them, we do not do as well as our competitors under the trade agreement. Yes, we increase the economy and the GDP, but on a surplus deficit basis, we start to fall behind. Why?

I think the answer is that as a country do not have a strategic plan on how to take advantage of that market agreement that we sign. Canada signs a trade agreement and "There you are, boys; go to her." We need a strategic plan on how we will seize the opportunities in that.

Does the member for Welland think we are getting that from the government? Specifically on the beef issue, the member for Welland said that we did not fill the quota for non-hormone fed beef. That is true. Now we have more quota and we will not fill that market unless we have a beef plant and infrastructure to get the beef into the plant, process it and market it in Europe. Would the member for Welland agree with me, and should the government be involved in providing that infrastructure and plan?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Malpeque raises some interesting things. The member has sat in the House for a substantial amount of time and has seen many agreements go back and forth. He is absolutely right when he says that the legislation is just waiting for a number to get slapped on it. Perhaps in his Thursday question, my hon. friend, the House leader of the official opposition, will glean that information from the other side. Perhaps we will find out there is a new bill on CETA with a number on it. Somehow, though, I do not think so.

I have my doubts. I am still waiting for the tooth fairy, but I do not think the tooth fairy is coming to visit me anymore; I am a little too old. The tooth fairy has got a better shot of getting to me than I have of seeing legislation on CETA from the Conservative government before Christmas. I would actually wager on that one, and members know that I do not bet very often, but I probably would here.

• (2040)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the common sense offered by the member for Welland, and I would like to hear his comments.

We have the Conservatives over here, who offer a little bit of the deal itself without providing the House with any of the enabling legislation, which we know would be hundreds of pages long. They have not put in place any transitional measures whatsoever. It is like asking us to buy a pig in a poke. They are saying, “Here is one wheel well; buy the whole car.”

We have been asking, what are the Conservatives hiding? Why do they not bring forward the enabling legislation? Why do they not bring forward the bills? What about the transitional measures that people across the country are calling for? The Conservative government has failed to do any of that.

Does my colleague from Welland think that the government is really being transparent with the Canadian public when it offers a deal but with no legislation and absolutely no transitional measures? How irresponsible is that?

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Mr. Speaker, he is right. Why would one accept it? Yes, the Conservatives have concluded an agreement in principle and have a lot of details about it, but they do not have anybody's signature on it from the other side of the ocean yet. They have to go through that.

There are a bunch of governments that are going to have new elections. In fact, I had the great honour of being in Ukraine when it elected its new parliament. There are others. Ukraine is not in the EU, but many of us on both sides of the House are hopeful that that will happen. I would like to thank my colleagues on the other side who accompanied me on that mission.

There are other things to do with this yet. We have clearly outlined in committee, in good faith, why we do not accept this. We put a report together that does not show dissent but how we think we can improve it and in which we added a couple of recommendations of our own. Of course, the government did not respond to them, which was really disappointing. It would have been nice if it had responded to our recommendations, though I realize it did not have to do so. In

my view, the recommendations were not offensive but were there to try to augment the report. That is why we do a supplementary report.

Clearly, we await the debate on CETA and the implementation language. As mentioned earlier, we do not debate trade here but debate enabling legislation. The debate comes after that. Let us be honest and admit that it does. We do not actually do that, but we sneak it in sometimes. When the legislation comes forward, it is not about the different viewpoints and how we do trade, but about whether we want it or not, and here is the deal. The Speaker allows us to go around it a bit and do that sort of stuff, but the bottom line is that we do not actually have that debate.

The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons was absolutely right when he talked about being a younger man at university and remembering the great debate in the eighties on the first free trade agreement. That really was a debate about free trade and what groups wanted this or that. It was the last time that such a debate happened. He was absolutely on the money when he said that. It was the last time, but the Conservative government is responsible for that because it does not bring trade agreements here to talk about trade. It brings them here to enable what the government has already decided to do.

Perhaps the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons should read his own remarks in *Hansard* tomorrow and find out if maybe he wants to have the policy discussion here, instead of enabling legislation and simply having a “yes” or “no”, “up” or “down” vote. Perhaps the House leader of the government would take a look at *Hansard* and decide to do something different in the future.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, my wise colleague, the member for Durham.

Mr. Speaker, the creation of jobs and economic growth for the benefit of Canadian businesses, workers, farmers, and their families continues to be our focus. That is why I am honoured to take this opportunity to speak about the comprehensive economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union.

The EU is the largest economy in the world, with its 28 member states, over 500 million consumers, and annual economic activity at \$17 trillion. The EU is the world's single-largest import market for goods. In fact, the EU's annual imports are worth more than Canada's total gross domestic product.

Last October, the Prime Minister announced that we had reached a historic agreement in principle with the EU. This September, at the Canada-EU summit, our government released the completed text of the agreement.

Yes, these are exciting times for Canadian farmers and processors. Thanks to this agreement, the future looks particularly bright for the industry's continued growth and success in the world market. A joint Canada-EU study that supported the launch of the negotiations concluded that a trade agreement between us would bring a 20% boost in bilateral trade and a \$12-billion annual increase to Canada's economy. To put it in more general terms, that is the economic equivalent of adding \$1,000 to the average Canadian family's income, or almost 80,000 new jobs to the Canadian economy.

Routine Proceedings

In my home province of Saskatchewan, workers and businesses stand to benefit significantly from the preferred access to the EU market. The EU is the province's third-largest export destination and trading partner. However, the current tariffs on Canadian agricultural products prevent our producers and exporters from being able to compete on a level playing field with the EU market. As an example, the tariff currently applied by the EU to exports of oats has been estimated to add almost 52% to the price of a bushel of Canadian oats in the EU, and on common wheat the tariff can run up to \$122 per tonne. These are not insignificant costs and represent serious barriers to market entry.

Our government recognizes that protectionist restrictions stifle our exporters and undermine Canada's competitiveness, which in turn adversely affect middle-class Canadian families.

When the Canadian-EU trade agreement is fully implemented, over 95% of the EU tariffs would be eliminated on our world-class agricultural exports, including oats, wheat, and canola oils. This would make all these products more competitive.

In Prince Edward Island, a significant portion of the province's world-class agricultural output is exported to the EU, which is the province's second-largest export destination and trading partner. As an example, the P.E.I.'s agricultural exports to the EU are worth an average of \$4.5 million annually, but the average EU tariff on agriculture products is almost 14%. In the fish and seafood sector, tariffs peak at 25%.

On the first day the agreement comes into force, the deal would eliminate EU tariffs on the vast majority of fish and seafood, including PEI's renowned live lobsters. Also, agricultural products, like P.E.I.'s famous frozen French fries, which can currently face tariffs of almost 18%, would no longer be subject to these financial burdens.

When the P.E.I. exporters compete and win in the global markets, they create jobs for Islanders.

For Nova Scotia, the EU is already the province's second-largest trading partner and largest export destination. Nova Scotia's fish and seafood exports to the EU were worth nearly \$160 million in 2013, making this sector the largest source of Nova Scotia's exports to the EU.

When the agriculture agreement comes into force, almost 96% of the EU tariff lines for fish and seafood would be duty-free. Seven years later, 100% of these tariff lines would be duty-free, making these world-class goods more competitive and creating the conditions for increased sales. Increased sales would directly benefit hard-working Nova Scotians through more jobs, higher wages, and greater long-term prosperity.

EU tariffs, for example, would be eliminated on live lobster, from the rate of 8%; on snow crab, from the rate of 7.5%; frozen scallops, from the rate of 8%; frozen shrimp, from the rate of 12%; and cooked and peeled shrimp, from the rate of 20%.

With its focus on quality, innovation, and value-added opportunities, Nova Scotia's agricultural and agrifood sector is well positioned to take advantage of these new opportunities.

There are more examples of these economic effects across the country. For example, the Canada-EU trade agreement would present new and expanded opportunities for Alberta producers. Agricultural products represent the second-largest source of Alberta's exports to the EU. The agreement would provide new market access opportunities for key Albertan exports of beef, pork, and bison.

● (2045)

Under CETA, Canadian farmers will have yearly duty-free access of up to 81,000 tonnes on pork, 50,000 tonnes on beef, and 3,000 on bison. Increased sales of these and other agricultural quantities will lead to more jobs, increased wages, and greater long-term prosperity.

In Quebec, producers will also benefit from these new opportunities in pork. As well, Quebec will be able to lock in duty-free sales of frozen blueberries and cranberries, which currently carry up to 17.5% duty.

Maple syrup producers will also benefit with the elimination of duties of 8%. Yes, even maple syrup producers will benefit. How could anyone oppose an agreement that allows Canadians to sell more maple syrup to the world and create more jobs here in Canada? In addition to the opportunities we have created for producers, we will work with the industry to help protect maple products against unfair competition from substitutes in the EU. We support the committee's recommendations on the issue.

As well, the Canada-EU trade agreement will establish a joint collaborative process where issues that impact trade can be raised and worked on jointly.

Trade has long been a powerful engine for Canada's economy, and even more so when there remain challenging times for this global economy. In fact, more than 60% of our gross domestic product is directly related to trade, and exports are directly linked to one in five Canadian jobs.

That is why our government is currently pursuing the most ambitious trade expansion plan in our country's history. By actively pursuing new trade and investment opportunities like this one with the EU, our Conservative government is providing Canadian workers and businesses with preferred access to the largest, most dynamic, and fastest-growing economies and regions in the world.

Our Conservative government is committed to protecting and strengthening the long-term financial security of hard-working Canadians. Thanks to the actions under our government's free trade leadership, Canadian workers, businesses, and exporters now have preferred access and a real competitive edge in more markets around the world than at any other time in our history.

We know that our Canadian exports can compete and win in the global marketplace. When our companies succeed abroad, jobs and growth are created here at home.

Routine Proceedings

I had a round table in Tisdale this last weekend back in my riding in Saskatchewan. When I talk about trade agreements, producers and farmers are excited about having market access. They know what that means for them and their bottom line and to the communities they support, when they go to buy groceries, goods, and services. This is huge. This is a large market that we will be accessing, which will provide new opportunities. It is actually going to raise the price of grains by allowing our goods to be sold into those markets.

It is surprising when we look at wheat. At a tariff of \$120 a tonne, we are still selling wheat into that market. However, when that tariff is eliminated, just think of how much more wheat we will be able to sell into that market. Also, if we look at the 52¢ a bushel tariff on oats and consider that an average farm in my area will grow 150 to 200 bushels an acre, it is a substantial amount of money that would return to farmers' pockets when we get access without the 52¢ a bushel tariff.

We are excited about this trade agreement. Saskatchewan is very excited about it and so are my producers. In fact, they are so excited about it they keep pressuring me and asking when we can get this done. They want it done now and ask why there is the delay and say that we should move it forward and get it done.

We look forward to seeing this deal move through this House, get completed, and get royal assent so that our producers, farmers, constituents, and communities can take advantage of all the benefits this deal has to offer.

We are very excited. I hope all the opposition parties and all the other members will be equally excited about such a great deal as this one here right now.

• (2050)

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would be very excited too if the government actually introduced the bill in the House to get approval of it.

I find the topic of trade agreements with the European Union and other countries very engaging. However, I have seen the record of the government on producing good trade agreements over the last three years.

The member talked about how the farmers are excited and how they want these trade deals. However, the wheat is rotting in the farmers' fields in Saskatchewan and Manitoba because the current government has failed to get that wheat to the ports. The Conservatives have failed to provide the rail service. We have been pushing the government to pressure the rail companies to take that wheat to the ports, but the government has failed to do so.

Will the Conservatives stand up for prairie farmers and dairy farmers when it comes to getting their product out to the ports and pressure the rail companies to deliver the product on time?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I actually find this very hilarious, when the member talks about wheat being in the fields and rotting. Those were issues eight months to a year ago, against which our government actually took strong actions.

We put in minimum volume requirements for CN and CP to get that grain to market. Actually it did move a lot of grain to market. It did have results, but it took this government and this party to

understand what the need was and actually get action, while the opposition sat on its hands.

It is interesting that they talk about the bill versus text. Why do they not read the text? Read the text. When you read the text, you understand how good it is. When they understand how good it is, they will be excited about the bill when it comes forward.

I would encourage you to read the text. It is very simple—

• (2055)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order. Order. The member for Prince Albert has now referred three times to “you”, not being me or the Chair. Please bring it back. We can have a bit more of a civilized discussion and debate. It has gotten way out of hand.

The hon. member for Prince Albert, complete your answer please.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I do apologize. I am just so excited about the text. I am so excited about this deal that I just cannot help myself.

My farmers are really passionate, and they want to see this move forward.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can see the excitement in the member.

It is valid for opposition members to ask the government questions. The Conservatives have been talking a great deal about the agreement. In principle, we have indicated we support it in the Liberal Party.

Having said that, there is an expectation that the government will in fact materialize on the legislation. The question is very simply put. When does the member believe we will actually see the legislation that is being talked about? Will we get it before the end of the year? If it is such a high priority for the government, can we anticipate seeing it before the end of the year?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I sure hope we can see it by the end of the year. I hope we do it as quickly as possible. However, we have to get ratification over in Europe as well. We will see how the process unfolds over a period of time.

I want to get back to the text and what it means to Canadian farmers. It is really exciting. Maple syrup would have market access into Europe, duty-free market access into Europe. Is that not exciting? Maple syrup would be on the shelves in grocery stores in the U.K. and France.

I went to Europe many times when I used to work for my former employer. They love maple syrup. That is one of the things I used to take with me as gifts that I would give to farmers and friends over there. They are going to be excited to buy maple syrup when they get the chance after this deal goes through.

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only is the member someone who has a number of agricultural producers in his riding of Prince Albert, but he was a great farmer himself and very active and involved in farm organizations.

I know he has been meeting with many of these farm organizations about how much they support our trade agenda.

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Could the member talk a little more fully, not just about all the great work we have done here with CETA and the great opportunities that this would present to agricultural producers across this country, but also about other trade agreements we have brought into play and how they have impacted the producers in his riding?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question.

I look back and I just think of the beef sector. The member is very familiar with the beef sector. Let us remember what the beef sector was three or four years ago, when it was in its down cycle. It was a horrible situation.

What did the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food do? He hopped on a plane and went and sold Canadian beef. Where is the beef sector today? I was talking to Canadian farmers in the beef sector, and it is at \$2,500 per steer. That is what happens when the market is opened up for products we produce, like steers.

When the beef is cut up, and the tongue is sold one place, the steak is sold one place, the roasts are sold in another place, and the goods that we do not necessarily consume here in Canada are sold in another place, then there is full extraction of value out of that product, and that return goes back to the farmer.

It is at \$2,500 a steer. These guys are smiling all the way to the bank. That is what trade can do for Canadian farmers.

When we look at wheat, we see there is \$120 a tonne tariff on wheat. That is roughly one tonne per acre. For a 1,000-acre farm, \$120,000 dollars is being collected from the farmer in tariffs. Would that not be better in the farm or in the community? That is what this type of deal would remove.

Mr. Erin O'Toole (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise tonight in this debate on the comprehensive economic and trade agreement with the European Union, negotiated by our government over several years in a form that is truly revolutionary for trade agreements. This agreement anticipates not only trade in mercantile goods and agricultural products but trade in services and sharing of professional services and professional recognition across the ocean, dipping into procurement and infrastructure projects. This is truly the 21st century benchmark for trade agreements.

As with all trade agreements that enter the House, one of the critical sectors for our negotiators has always been agriculture. The agriculture sector is well understood by this government, but more important, farming families across Canada are at the centre of much of what this government does on its trade policy work.

I would remind the House that Conservative governments have granted Canadian exporters, including our farmers, 98% of their market access around the world. Ninety-eight per cent of our trade opportunities have been negotiated by Conservative governments. In many ways, trade and our success in the last few years under the present Prime Minister is one of the hallmarks of our economic track record of success that is leading the G7.

At the focus of the reason these new markets and new opportunities are important are farming families. I am speaking of farming families like the Mustard family in my riding of Durham, sixth-generation dairy farmers, and that of my colleague from

Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, who came to Parliament from a dairy background. We have farmers in our party. We heard from my colleague from Prince Albert. We have farmers in the House who bring their experience and their knowledge of what is important to farming families to the debate and to the negotiated outcomes of our trade agreements. We have always said we will not reach a trade agreement unless it is a win for all sectors, and that includes supply-managed sectors.

That 98% of market access that our government has secured was done while we have been able to maintain the four pillars of supply management. That, particularly in the global economy, is a real accomplishment, and it is an accomplishment because it is a priority. Our government set it out as a key priority when entering into these negotiations and obtaining outcomes that are wins for all sectors, including the supply-managed sector.

It is my privilege in my role as parliamentary secretary for international trade to meet with these sectors, including our supply-managed sectors. They see that we have been careful in our negotiations to secure wins for all agricultural commodities but, in particular, not sacrificing one for the other. We are proud of that.

The comprehensive economic and trade agreement, CETA, is an example of such success. When this agreement is implemented we would have 50,000 tonnes of access for our beef farmers. I have spoken to farmers in Alberta and Ontario who told me that they were struggling for many years, and only in the last two years have margins on beef become profitable. We have seen improper trade actions from our largest partner to the south, so those have encouraged us even more to get access for these farmers in global markets.

I am proud to be part of a government that has secured that with South Korea. It was so good that the NDP, after 50 years of opposing trade, had to acknowledge it was a great deal. Those members stood in the House to support it.

The European deal is equally ambitious, because our beef producers, some of the world's best, are effectively blocked by a huge 20% tariff. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association has estimated that CETA, when implemented for Canada, would represent a \$600 million win in that industry alone. That is truly incredible.

Routine Proceedings

● (2100)

Equally important is pork. We would be able to get 81,000 tonnes of tariff-free access for fresh or frozen pork products. I have met with the industry across the country, particularly in Brandon, Manitoba, where there is an underutilized facility needing new markets. If we can get the provincial government to address the moratorium on hog barns and get production levels up, we will have one of the world-class facilities there ready to ramp up to gain access to markets like South Korea and Europe for our pork products. It is another industry that has seen some challenges in the last decade, so securing new markets would be important.

Why is that important? It is because price would be assured, and a higher price is assured when there is more than one customer. Canada has been very lucky to sit on the border of a very large and hungry market, so we have been able to rely heavily on the U.S. trade relationship, which is still critical for our country, but having more markets secures better prices for our farmers and reduces risk by diversifying the markets into which we can export.

In debate tonight, members have already mentioned a range of other products, so I am not going to repeat a lot of them. I am going to focus on a couple that are very important to my riding of Durham in southern Ontario, which has some of the best agricultural land in Canada. Fresh apples have a 9% tariff rate that would come down with the European deal. The Kemp and Gibson families at Algoma Orchards in Bowmanville and Newcastle have been ramping up their operations, building a facility for processing. This would be a brand new market of 500 million consumers. Not far from them is the Stevens family, Charles, Judi, and Courtney, who are famous for creating the first blueberry marshmallows in the world. Fresh blueberries are at a 14% tariff.

When we start adding tariff rates like that to the cost of goods, they are essentially a wall to access. Through the work of this government in the last few years, we have been able to reach an agreement that would get rid of these tariff rates and allow these producers to gain access to a market that represents a bigger market than NAFTA, with some of the largest and most diverse economies in the world and with a strong middle class that wants world-class Canadian food products—across the board: meats, livestock, grain oil seeds, fruits, produce.

I met with the produce producers today, who are very bullish on the future due to trade, and this is an opportunity and a deal that represents a win from coast to coast on agriculture. We have heard about the wine and some of the fruits in British Columbia, through to the grain and oil seeds and durum wheat in the Prairies, to the beef and pork in Ontario, to fruits and maple syrup in Quebec, to frozen potato products, which have had a tariff rate as high as 17% for P.E.I. and parts of the Maritimes.

It is really once in a generation that we get such a tremendous opportunity for the agricultural sector as the CETA European trade deal represents. The last generational opportunity for Canadian exporters was the U.S. Free Trade Agreement negotiated with the vision of the Conservative government at that time. It really takes the Conservatives to open these new markets for our farmers, to allow them to diversify their markets and raise their average price.

It has been an honour for me as parliamentary secretary to meet with stakeholders from coast to coast to coast to work with them on their plans to get ready for the market access that CETA would represent. Whether it is the cattle or pork producers in western Canada or some of the fresh fruit and horticulture sectors here in Ontario, they are ambitious about this opportunity because we have some of the best agricultural businesses in the world and some of the best products to sell. Now we are giving our farmers more markets to sell them in. It is a huge opportunity, and I hope the NDP will finally get behind it.

● (2105)

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for his comments on this particular file and on trade in general. I have a couple of comments and then a specific question.

The member referenced the red-meat sector, and the numbers he used are quite accurate. They come out of the report, as I am sure he is well aware, based on his portfolio. The problem is that if we have access now, it is not going to be utilized. That is the what-if piece.

James Laws, of the Canadian Meat Council, said that his industry might need some investment and some government assistance to get the investment in those processors. There is no question in my mind that primary producers and ranchers across this country can indeed raise beef cattle for the European market.

My specific question is on the issue of supply management. Let me just be sure that I use the term correctly, because these terms get interchanged. It comes directly from the report. The milk protein substances tariffs would be phased out to give the EU the same access as the United States. However, the committee heard from the Dairy Farmers of Canada that it should be over 10 years.

My question is for the parliamentary secretary. Would that be a 10-year phase-out period, or would that simply disappear, and the Europeans would get the same access as the U.S. has now?

● (2110)

Mr. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for that question, and I would like to thank my colleague from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex for recognizing that I said the “four pillars of supply management” when there are actually three pillars. I was thinking of a table as opposed to a stool, I guess. We know that those fundamentals are import levels, production levels, and price.

Routine Proceedings

The hon. member is asking about timelines. I would ask him to recognize one thing. When the Prime Minister was in Brussels for the historic signing of the final negotiated outcome, when the negotiators had reached the essential terms of the agreement, the only industry the Prime Minister raised in his remarks at that international event was the supply-managed dairy sector. That was the case because it is a very important sector. Over a timeframe, we are going to see that if the slight adjustment to imports leads to a change in quota, and indirectly, therefore, to a change in the income of the farming family that is at the centre of what we do, we will build in a compensation structure to address it. That is a guarantee that, at the end of this, farmers will remain whole despite the small change in import levels.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to Brandon and the Maple Leaf plant, and he talked about some of the conditions around Brandon. There is no doubt that trade, in particular the Korean deal more so than the EU deal, would have a very positive impact on pork production in my home province.

With the Burns plant there, the member is quite right that there is a need for additional hogs, and there is a problem in terms of the moratorium the provincial government has put in place. However, when I toured the facility, one of the other issues raised in terms of meeting the demand was that they were not able to acquire the labour for the processing plant, and there was a reference to temporary foreign workers.

I wonder if the member might be in a position to provide some comment on that aspect of the plant. I know many of the management people in that plant are concerned about being able to get the workers they need to produce the pork that they know they can sell.

Mr. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for that question. Certainly his experience in the Manitoba legislature gives him the background on the hog moratorium, which, in the case of the Brandon Maple Leaf facility, has impacted its ability to meet production levels to a point that the facility runs at a high efficiency rate.

The member mentioned the South Korean deal. That is a very big win for that plant in particular, and they acknowledge that. The CETA deal is also, because as I said in my remarks, the more markets they have, the better overall price they will have.

The specific issue of temporary foreign workers has been addressed by our modernization of the program, which recognizes that the program is only intended for areas like Brandon that have almost full employment because of resources, agriculture, and other opportunities there. However, in areas of Ontario, like mine, the program was being abused and needed to be reformed.

• (2115)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be sharing my time with my colleague from Pontiac.

We would have liked the government to introduce a bill, but perhaps it will in the near future or a bit later, before the House rises in June, or maybe even on December 12.

During the study in committee, we heard from dozens of witnesses and we agreed on a few recommendations. Free trade is the cornerstone of economic development in the agriculture sector and will certainly provide exciting opportunities for many stakeholders in the sector. Technology now allows us to produce more, and faster. Nonetheless, we have to be able to deliver the goods. The more demand there is, the more we have to provide top-quality merchandise. Many provincial and federal sectors have welcomed this agreement with open arms. I sincerely hope it will help our farmers deliver the goods.

However, I cannot say that the government's response to our report is totally satisfactory. There are some contradictions in its responses with regard to what the report called for. I would like to clarify a small detail. The recommendations that we see here are the ones the committee adopted, but partisanship is commonplace in the committees and, as they do in Parliament, the Conservatives have a majority there. There were other recommendations that we wanted to adopt following the testimony we heard. Unfortunately, those requests by the NDP were rejected. That being said, I will come back to these recommendations.

My goal here is to show that the recommendations in the report arose from a Conservative consensus. I am surprised that the government is responding so weakly to its own recommendations. For example, on supply management, the government's response clearly indicates that it will continue to defend that system. However, I was expecting the government to do more than that.

The committee's report clearly states that the removal of tariff barriers could upset this management system, particularly for dairy products. I had many conversations with representatives of the Union des producteurs agricoles, egg producers, poultry producers and dairy producers. In the summer of 2013, I went on an agricultural tour of my riding, Joliette.

All of these people told me that the supply management system, which was chosen by the industry, is valid and effective and that the government must maintain it. The president of Dairy Farmers of Canada, Mr. Smith, said that the three pillars of supply management are still in place. These three pillars are production management, import controls and farm pricing based on production costs. I am concerned that CETA will weaken those three pillars, which is why we must make sure that the supply management system has the tools it needs to survive.

In its response to the committee's recommendation about that, the government says that Canada continues to strongly support the system on the international stage. That sounds like a good answer, but what does it really mean? As the committee indicated in the report, the dairy industry wants the government to strengthen the three pillars of supply management and to ensure a 10-year transition period to eliminate duties on milk protein isolates.

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The most concrete measure in the government's response is about amending Canada's customs tariff to address the problem of goods packaged in such a way as to circumvent Canadian regulations. It would be interesting to hear more about that. That is certainly one way to circumvent our tariff barriers.

• (2120)

We saw this with the pizza kits that were disassembled when they got to Canada so that merchants could sell the cheese and get around the supply management system.

There were also problems in the poultry industry, when American exporters were selling us turkey as so-called mature chicken. When we go grocery shopping at Christmas, we may see the label "mature chicken".

I was a farmer and I have never seen a mature chicken. A mature chicken is a hen or a rooster that is at the end of its reproductive years. However, it was shown that the mature chicken that is imported to Canada from the United States exceeds that country's entire production. Imagine how much poultry is not being accounted for in our supply management model.

I therefore hope that the government has done its homework on this and that that is what we are talking about here. I would even ask the government to clarify this issue.

What amendments are we talking about? When were they made? Frankly, the word "recently" does not correspond to a date on a calendar and I would like to know more.

In my riding of Joliette there are many dairy farmers, some artisanal cheese makers and a winery. These industries are among those that will have the most difficulty competing with European imports, which are often heavily subsidized. Indeed, last Sunday on *La semaine verte*, we learned that sheep producers in Iceland are subsidized.

That is why the NDP recommended that the government keep its promise to dairy and cheese producers. Unfortunately, our Conservative colleagues did not follow that recommendation, and I would like to know more about why since producers in those industries will need help to adapt and remain competitive.

CETA will no doubt provide many business opportunities in a number of industries and thus benefit the Canadian economy. However, it could cause a net loss for some industries that are quite prominent in the riding of Joliette, such as the dairy and cheese industries.

Could the government be more clear about the compensation these producers will receive? It is all well and good to say that they will be compensated, but how much will they get? Earlier, it was said that they would be compensated on the basis of their losses, but all that remains to be seen.

Since I used to be a farmer, I know that it helps to know where you are going, and the fact that the government is stalling right now must have producers in a cold sweat.

Another recommendation that the NDP would have liked to see in the report involves ensuring transparency in the harmonization of health standards. It is a major problem. Think about the listeriosis

crisis. Quebec's artisan cheese producers lost millions of dollars in production because of preventative measures, while imported cheese arrived by the tonne and was not subjected to the same treatment.

It was said that the exporting country's food safety rules prevailed. However, in the interest of public safety, is it not important to take this more seriously and include that concern in our trade agreements?

The government recently cut the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's budget by \$45 million. In the wake of the XL Foods scandal, I cannot say that I, as a Canadian, feel protected.

In a world that is increasingly interdependent trade-wise, basic common sense tells us that we should work to make our trade agreements more responsible and accountable to the people.

Earlier, I spoke about partisanship in committee. Let us look at recommendation number 5 in the government's response:

RECOMMENDATION 5

...that the Government of Canada continue to pursue additional comprehensive trade agreements to open new markets...

It is all well and good to say that, but then what happens?

Free trade became the new global economic reality more than 20 years ago. Should we not be concerned by the fact that there will be other agreements?

What is needed is a better framework and more transparency to ensure that these agreements are truly beneficial to those who matter most to us in the House: Canadians.

To conclude, I know that I did not speak to all of the recommendations, but I wanted to express my views and those of my constituents on certain parts of the report.

• (2125)

I would like to commend the government for supporting sugar maple growers. Quebec alone accounts for 96% of maple syrup sales abroad. It makes sense to ensure that the phrase "maple syrup" appears only on the original product, not on imitation products.

If the European Union has the necessary tools to monitor that, I would suggest that this recommendation be included in other potential agreements, notably in Asia, where we have seen the proliferation of counterfeit maple syrup.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an amendment has been brought forward that in essence challenges the opposition parties to state what our positions would be, because we will likely be having a vote on this tomorrow. I am wondering if the member might reflect on the amendment that has been put forward this evening and give her opinion on whether it is an amendment we should be voting for.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Raynault: Mr. Speaker, all of these recommendations really need to be studied. We will see what bill comes back to us. We will study the recommendations and the bill. I look forward to seeing it. They proposed some recommendations, but we absolutely need to study this bill again.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank my colleague from Joliette for her speech this evening and also for the good work she does on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food. I also want to mention what a good job she does representing her constituents. As members may know, the riding of Berthier—Maskinongé is right next to my colleague's riding of Joliette.

I just wanted to talk about the fact that 17,000 additional tonnes of cheese will be imported under the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. I know that a number of stakeholders, especially in Quebec, had some serious concerns about this breach. A number of groups told us that if the agreement was implemented as is, it would undermine our supply management system.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about the concerns in the province of Quebec, which produces a number of high-quality cheeses. Could she also talk about future trade agreements—perhaps the trans-Pacific partnership—about the uncertainty facing dairy farmers and about the future of supply management in Canada?

Ms. Francine Raynault: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the neighbouring riding of Joliette for her question.

Indeed, I just said that last year I did an agricultural tour of the riding of Joliette. Dairy and cheese producers are quite concerned. They are wondering whether supply management will continue to support them. It takes years of preparation to get good quality cheese. Not only does it take years of work to get good cheese, but there is also all the money that goes into research in order to produce a cheese that will appeal to consumers, not just in Joliette, but throughout Quebec and Canada.

The farmers told me they hope supply management is here to stay as it is. They do not want it to change. They know they will lose out if anything changes because all sorts of cheeses will enter the market. The farmers will suffer losses. The government is telling us that the farmers will get financial compensation, but they are worried.

Could the government truly reassure them by saying that supply management will be protected?

• (2130)

[*English*]

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just have a very quick question. There has been a lot of discussion about supply management. I would like to ask my colleague which one of the three pillars, if any, this EU trade agreement would impact negatively. Could she name the one that it would impact, and what that impact would be?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Raynault: Mr. Speaker, people have told me that they were worried about what would happen to dairy products. They do not know anything. People listen to the news, they listen to what the government is saying, but they are worried. I really have nothing more to add. People are worried and they are not sure that supply management is here to stay.

[*English*]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a distinct pleasure to rise in the House to talk about this report and the amendment put to it. It is truly an honour to represent a riding of farmers. It will come as no surprise to the majority of people in the House that Pontiac is mainly an agricultural riding. All along the Gatineau River and the Ottawa River are farms. Settlers, whether they were Irish, Scottish, or French, picked this part of the country to settle because of the quality of its farmland.

They are worried. We cannot hide that, and they are right to be worried. It is not only the dairy farmers in my riding who are worried, but also the beef producers. It is mainly because of the lack of information. It is also because there are certain assumptions made, due to messaging from the government at the very beginning of the negotiations of CETA, about supply management that have, frankly, proven to be false.

In fact, supply management is being undermined by the measures of the Conservative government. It is called importation of a certain amount of product, which actually affects the supply management chain. One would think that before launching something of this magnitude, we would do the fundamental market research necessary to determine where our strengths and weaknesses are. When we go to the negotiating table, we would have that information with us to ensure that we negotiate a good deal for Canadians. That is just fundamental work.

I happened to have the privilege of being part of the original committee that went to Europe to study the free trade agreement. There were a couple of issues brought up by the Europeans. For example, back then they were worried about having their geographic indicators respected. We met with some of the agricultural industry in France. It spoke with particular concern about this. It also talked about the possibility of having Canadian beef flooding its market. It talked about GMO products. All of my colleagues on that committee across the way who joined me will recall those words.

That was the picture then. This is now. What seems obvious to me is that we have caved in on every single one of those worries that our European counterparts had. I do not call that negotiating. I call that lying down and allowing them to step all over us, and for what reason? All of us have to ask that question. What agricultural industry is pushing the Conservative government hard enough to put into question some pretty fundamental measures in place in our economic structures to protect our family farms and, particularly in Quebec, supply management?

There is another elephant in the room with regard to CETA, and many of the European colleagues brought this up. I remember asking this very pointed question of the negotiators that we met in Europe. I asked what guarantees there were that this agreement would go through all of the different legislatures that make up the European Union. There was not a single person we met during that trip who could answer how and if that were going to happen.

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Does it surprise me that we do not have a bill dealing with CETA in front of us? No, because one thing that the Conservative government fundamentally did not take into consideration was the reaction of the national state members of the EU. We saw how that reaction blew up for the government when Germany suddenly decided that maybe it was not such a good deal. That is Germany, a major player in the European Union, but we have not dealt with the vast majority of the countries that are part of the European Union.

● (2135)

How can the government guarantee us today that all the member states are going to approve this agreement and it will go forward? That is the elephant in the room. That is probably why we have not seen anything come forward. Conservatives expect us to agree to this agreement without actually seeing the bill come to Parliament.

I will give a bit of context to this. I do not recall, but it has to be a couple of years since the Conservatives began this negotiation. Did we ever see a single text? We actually had to get the Europeans to leak a draft text to us so we could see it. What kind of transparency is that? They are touting it as the most fundamental, greatest, most magnificent trade deal ever in the history of Canada, well beyond NAFTA. When did we get the draft of NAFTA? If we go back and check the history, we will see that the process of NAFTA was 90% more transparent than this one. Therefore, I do not understand why, fundamentally, they did not make this information available to Canadians sooner.

Members can understand why farmers in my riding, in that kind of context, would be extremely skeptical with regard to the impact this would have on their lives. We have to take into consideration that there are not all that many family farms left in Canada. There is nothing wrong with industrial farming, but it has fundamentally taken over our agricultural market. There are very few family farms.

A family farm is not just an economic unit. A family farm is a community. A family farm is truly the heart of communities like Shawville, Campbell's Bay, Fort-Coulonge, or Gracefield. What is allowing these family farms to survive is a very reasonable, cost-effective, and very efficient supply management system. The Europeans subsidize their farmers massively. They would not stop doing that under this trade agreement. Therefore, tit for tat, we have to make sure our farmers remain competitive.

Let us talk about beef, because the Conservatives are touting that this would have a fundamental impact on the amount of beef that would hit the European market. The beef producers would actually have to modify the way they produce beef, particularly with hormones. Hormones have an incidence on growth rates, so we have to keep that in mind with regard to the amount of production that can go forward. We have to check that with the amount of beef that can actually be exported. Also, if that transformation is going to occur, where would the transitional money come from to allow those producers to go forward, change the way they do their production, and export. Fundamentally, that is a change that matters to the farmers of the Pontiac.

Because the member of Parliament opposite suggested that perhaps this report should go back to the committee, I would like to move the following subamendment. I move:

That the amendment be amended by adding after the word "negotiated" the following:

"and the Committee only report back to the House following the introduction in the House of Commons of all implementing legislation and the announcement by the government of all transitional measures, including financial compensation."

● (2140)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The subamendment is admissible.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, like the member's riding, has a lot of dairy producers in it. Probably the biggest dairy producing region in British Columbia is in Chilliwack and the district of Kent.

I am little perplexed. The government has taken action any time the Dairy Farmers of Canada has raised a concern, whether it be on milk protein concentrates, compositional cheese standards, or pizza kits. It has been our government and our ministers of agriculture who have taken action to protect supply management.

It was our party that had the protection of the supply management system in our last election platform, something none of the other parties had.

Perhaps the reason the member's farmers are afraid of the Canada-EU trade agreement is that he is spreading misinformation and fearmongering in that group of farmers.

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Mr. Speaker, first, that is an interesting theory, as if I could tell my farmers what to think. Obviously, the member does not know his own farmers if he thinks that is the case.

Second, he should listen to Mr. Wally Smith to get a sense of what they think officially about what the Conservatives are doing to supply management.

I need to congratulate the member for Welland as well as the member of Parliament for Berthier—Maskinongé for the incredible work they have done on the file, particularly wrestling out of the government a commitment to compensate farmers who are under supply management.

To add to my answer to the member's question, where is the compensation package?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if I did not know any better, I would suggest that maybe this subamendment might be kind of a weasel way of getting out of possibly voting for the amendment itself. This is very interesting. I think we might even potentially support the subamendment. I do not know if we will get the government to support it, which means that it could be defeated at the end of the day. It would then force the member to vote on the amendment.

If that were to happen, how would he and his party vote? Do they believe the principle of the agreement that is being referred to is something that will benefit Canada?

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• (2145)

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Mr. Speaker, the fundamental point here about this amendment is to ensure that due process is in place, that we actually follow some kind of logical progression with regard to introducing bills and legislation in the House.

That would not be too difficult to ask the government to do, for once. It could actually look at things, put things in a logical order, start where we should start, and that is to figure out how this will be implemented and what the compensation package is, and then come to the House for a full debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like many members in the House, I represent a region whose economy depends largely on agriculture, and particularly the dairy industry. Therefore, I welcome this subamendment.

I hear many concerns expressed by dairy producers, because they do not have all the information at this time. Yes, there is a free trade agreement with the European Union, and farmers know that there will be changes; however, the government promised countervailing measures, but we know nothing of the details of those measures.

I wonder whether the member for Pontiac, who did an excellent job talking about this file, could discuss how the government seems to be dragging its feet regarding an announcement on compensation. The issue of compensation is not just relevant for agriculture and dairy producers. It also applies to intellectual property, pharmaceutical companies and the provinces. We need to know why the government has been slow in making an announcement. Dairy producers are very concerned and are anxiously awaiting such an announcement.

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question.

The French are far ahead of us when it comes to protecting intellectual property. Laws in Europe are not consistent with ours. That is why we must ensure that Quebec's pharmaceutical industry remains competitive in the context of an international free trade agreement.

This simply shows that the government did not do enough industrial research during the negotiations.

[*English*]

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an opportunity and a pleasure to speak tonight on CETA. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake, and I look forward to hearing his intervention, following mine.

As chairman of the agriculture committee, I want to first thank all the members of all parties for their interventions and the work that was put into coming forward with the report on the economic trade agreement with Europe.

The historic agreement with Canada and Europe came about because there had been an incredible amount of consultation with farmers, which I am pleased to say has been my life occupation. When we talk about dairy, I lived that for a few decades. Thankfully,

I still have the opportunity to be in farming by having someone to help manage it.

What we did as a government was make sure that we had a full impact, whether it was with farmers or processors. I guess we can talk about all the stakeholders. We did that because we wanted to make sure that when we got to the negotiating table, we had the support and the concerns of each and every one of those stakeholders.

We are at the stage now where we have the report. I am pleased to say that we have the committee's recommendations, and our government supports those. Basically there are five. It recommends that we approve the agreement to expedite the economic benefits it would bring to Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector; that we continue our strong defence of supply management, which seems to have captured a lot of the discussion here tonight; that we leverage this agreement to harmonize approvals for new agriculture and agri-food technologies; that we work with industry to protect maple products from unfair competition from substitutes in the EU; and that we continue to pursue additional comprehensive trade agreements. That last one is key to what our agriculture and agri-food industry wants us to do.

This, without a doubt, is one of the most exciting times to be in agriculture. This is an exciting time for farmers and processors. It is an exciting time for those in the agri-food industry. It is because of the 24 agreements with 43 countries that have been negotiated and finalized. What it means to our producers and our industry is that we have opened opportunities. We can produce and sell into markets and invest in our technology and innovation so that our industry looks forward.

I talk to the young farmers and the farmers who are coming along in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and Southwestern Ontario.

• (2150)

I am very fortunate to represent my riding, which is not unlike that of my colleague across the way from Pontiac. We talked earlier today, and we have similar ridings, very rural and agricultural with small towns, which means small family-oriented businesses. There is a diversity of livestock, supply management, grains and oil seeds as well as horticulture and greenhouses across my riding. There is incredible diversity, and each and every one of these businesses sees the opportunities in this trade agreement.

However, we are hearing from the other side: what about supply management? It is sort of an interesting comment, because everybody has their quotes, but for supply management, we must look in terms of the amount of imports that would come from this agreement, which I believe is around some 17,000 tonnes for cheeses.

Canadian cheeses are so popular. In fact, during the debates and witness testimonies in committee, we had a cheese producer from Quebec come in with some samples of cheese. I have to say that it was incredible cheese. The owner of the company commented that she did not have a concern with the agreement and actually saw an opportunity to market her product. She saw an opportunity to grow the market for these great cheeses.

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We love cheese in Canada. The growth in cheese consumption in Canada is somewhere in the range of 8,000 tonnes per year. It seems to me that, when I listened to those producers and processors, they were saying that they have an opportunity and wondered why they could not meet that demand domestically in Canada. Those of us who are in the dairy industry and understand it know that it is true entrepreneurship. Those entrepreneurs think that this is a challenge and an opportunity.

When I talk to the young farmers in my riding, they are excited. The industry of agriculture is not unlike any other industry, such as high technology, and there is innovation and opportunity. This agreement talks about all of that. It talks about our farming generation that wants opportunity. The members of this generation want us to give them access to markets and then let them go.

Will they be able to provide hormone-free beef? Give them the opportunity and they will. Will there be processing plants to deal with the pork? We have had those conversations with the member from Manitoba, and we respect the concerns in Manitoba for that growth. However, we have opportunities in Alberta, where they want to build or expand a plant to process hormone-free beef. Why? It is because this agreement gives them the opportunity to sell it in a new market.

In closing, with almost half of Canada's total agriculture production exported, we have potential for growth in the sector, which lies in its ability to expand its markets abroad, making market access a key priority for this great industry that I am involved in along with many others across the country.

• (2155)

I ask the NDP in particular to stand and support this agreement, because not only will it be good across Canada, but it will actually also be good for those in Quebec the members keep talking about and are concerned it will harm. It will not. It is good for Canadian agriculture.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. I have served with him on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts a few times. I know that he is very knowledgeable about this file, and I also know that he worked very hard on this report.

I have one main concern. As he mentioned, I have no doubt that our farmers can do very well from a trade standpoint and that they can develop their markets in the European Union. The question is whether they can be competitive given the subsidies, and the amount of the subsidies, that the European Union gives its own producers, for example, in support of market price. The issue is not whether our beef or grain producers are efficient and productive, in the sense of productivity, but whether they are efficient and productive enough to compete against European agricultural products in Europe.

I would like to know why there is practically no mention of the issue of subsidies in the committee report.

[*English*]

Mr. Bev Shipley: Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that the question came forward and I know it comes from his heart. The difference in

philosophy between the NDP and us is that we believe that farmers do not want subsidization but markets. Farmers want the ability to expand and to have access to markets, which we in government have the responsibility of giving them.

One of the other great things is the ability to be competitive with some of the other farm subsidies, whether in Europe or the United States. That why we are going to have a debate in another couple of nights on Bill C-18, the agricultural growth act, which is going to give an incredible amount of support and opportunity to farmers to be competitive, so hang in. I have all the faith in our farmers that they will compete. Give them the markets and they will compete and produce.

• (2200)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is related to supply management. The Liberal Party recognizes the great value that supply management provides to our farmers in all regions of our country. I had the opportunity to tour a dairy farm over the summer, and one could not walk away without feeling confident that through our supply management we produce some of the best cheese in the world and that the quality of our milk is second to none. Farmers as a whole see so much value in supply management.

It is nice that the Conservatives incorporated it into the amendment, providing some sort of affirmation of their support for supply management. However, the Conservative government promised to support the Canadian Wheat Board, but at the end of the day it got rid of that board's monopoly. Why should farmers be confident in the government's commitment to supply management today?

Mr. Bev Shipley: Mr. Speaker, the answer is that we are the only party in the House that has ever taken any concrete action to protect supply management and to meet the requests of supply management, whether it was the compositional structure of cheese or whether it was the pizza kits. Everybody wants to talk about it, but talking does not get us anywhere. We have to take action.

When supply management people come to us, of course there is a debate. There should be a full debate about how protection works. We have supported the three pillars of supply management, and every one of those will change over a period of time, as they should. Supply management is not in concrete. It is a living document. The industry is a living industry that will progress and move with what technology and innovation bring.

We always say we support supply management. Everybody says that. However, when it comes down to it, our party is the only party that has ever taken any action to protect it so that it will remain viable, strong, and sustainable for the long term.

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Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to join in this important debate on the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement, or CETA. As someone who formerly chaired the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, I want to compliment the members of the committee for the work they have done in putting together this report and allowing us this opportunity for debate. I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for his amendment to have the committee revisit this report and make sure that everything has been properly considered before the signing of the final agreement.

As many in the House know, I am a cattle producer and someone who still feels very passionate about agriculture. Being from a riding that has a diversified agriculture background with grain, oilseed, and supply-managed farms, as well as a very large and vibrant ranching community, I can say that this agreement is well endorsed and supported by the producers in my riding. They are just ecstatic about the opportunity to expand their markets.

I have listened carefully to the debate and I am a little concerned that some members have suggested that maybe we do not need this agreement or that the markets are not there. As someone who lived through the BSE crisis, I and my friends and even my family had to endure some significantly difficult years. We saw the result of not being able to market our products around the world. We saw what happened to the prices of livestock in this country as markets all over the world shut their doors. Every effort that is made to open up those doors and to diversify market share for our agriculture producers is something that every farmer across this country supports. We cannot have all our eggs in one basket.

When I ran for election back in 2004 in the heat of the BSE crisis, the one thing that farmers were telling me—not just in my riding but right across the country, because of my former involvement with the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association and the Canadian Cattle-men's Association—was that we have to diversify our markets and not be so dependent on the United States. The United States is next door and is easy to access, but at the same time we need opportunities to market. Therefore, moving to more free trade agreements, as our government has done, is something that is well regarded and very much appreciated by farmers across Canada.

Our agricultural goods and food exports have continued to grow over the past five years and have increased by 30%. Farmers are capitalizing on those opportunities and farmers are the ones benefiting from that expanded market. In the last year, we broke the \$50 billion mark in the export threshold for the first time in our nation's history. That is huge. It is providing more dollars into the farming economy, it is creating jobs, it is creating prosperity, and it is something that continues to drive our overall economy and GDP as a country.

Today Canada is the world's largest agricultural trader on a per capita basis, according to Farm Credit Canada. What has led to this remarkable success? It is because this government and our Prime Minister believe in free trade and in having as many countries as we can to do business with. It is because of the hard work that we have seen from our trade minister and our agriculture minister as they continue to travel around the world, knocking on doors and creating

sales opportunities for producers and manufacturers from coast to coast to coast. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has already led over 40 trade missions with industry, and each one has resulted in increased opportunities for our industry and benefited the economy. In fact, the minister just returned from his 11th mission to China, where he accompanied the Prime Minister to build on our trade relationship there and to continue to grow that lucrative market.

● (2205)

Agriculture, and the trade component of it, is not just about shipping cows and shipping bushels of wheat and canola. It is about technology now. It is about added value. It is about complete integrated systems where supply chains are met from one end to the other, and providing products that consumers want.

The opposition members say that we will be unable to move our beef into Europe because it has phytosanitary restrictions such as non-hormone beef. Guess what? If the market is there, our producers will raise those types of animals, and it is easy to do and it can happen very quickly. Even though there might be some production losses, if the dollars are more lucrative and there are more dollars in their pocket at the end of the day, they will not hesitate to jump on that opportunity.

As a case in point, my brother and my dad do a bit of organic farming. On the lands that they have certified for organic production, they do not get the same production that they get off the conventional part of the farm. They do not have the same quality of crops, in some cases, that they would under conventional farming. However, they do it because there is a market for it and it is lucrative. That is what motivates producers to make changes in production practices to meet the market. That is what this is about: creating more of those opportunities.

When the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister of International Trade were in China, they saw some great deals being signed. One was with the canola industry in China, using more canola oil from Canada, at \$1 billion. That is significant. It is \$1 billion in just one country with that trade deal. Those are the types of things we are trying to accomplish with the CETA deal.

We are seeing all sorts of commodities benefiting from these increased opportunities in China. On the China trip there was a cherry deal signed worth over \$20 million. There were \$400 million in new market access gains in the minister's trip back in June, plus they signed \$280 million worth of agriculture contracts. When we add it all up, over the past five years, just in China—never mind what we are trying to do in Europe—that has increased our sales by \$5.6 billion in Canada. We are getting beef access into the China market, increasing beef sales back into Taiwan, which is the very last market to open up to us after the BSE crisis.

These are the things that really help promote agriculture, that provide the opportunity for that intergenerational transfer of farms from father and mother to sons and daughters. If we do not have dollars in our pockets, if we do not have the opportunity to make money, those transfers do not happen to the next generation.

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When we took government, one thing we did was establish Canada's Market Access Secretariat just to concentrate on developing trade opportunities. That has brought industry together with federal government and the provinces, and it has built bridges with our trading partners. This type of coordinated approach allows us to identify and resolve trade irritants aggressively and strategically. It allows us, when we are putting together our trade agreements, to talk about what are the best practices in our experience with other trade agreements and to implement that so we have proper dispute resolution systems. Also, it allows us to build upon our competitiveness and where we have strength within the trade sectors.

As a result, we have identified target markets, which accounted for 85% of our total exports last year. When we take in the conclusion of CETA, add in the South Korean deal and add in Honduras, we realize that all of a sudden we have preferential market access in Europe, Asia and across the Americas. That is 38 countries that we now have trade agreements with, and when we add in the increase and continue to grow those, we will have access to over 44% of the world's agriculture and agri-food markets. That trade potential more than doubles when we take into account countries with which we are still negotiating. We will peak at 63% market access and we will have almost two-thirds of the world's agriculture import market.

We have trade agreements with more than half of the entire global marketplace, and that, just within the European context, is worth more than \$138 billion.

• (2210)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

According to the executive director of the Canadian Meat Council, Canadian producers of prepared meats are worried about concessions on geographical indications made to the European Union. They are also concerned that the concessions are not reciprocal. These meat sector businesses could lose their trademarks for products with annual sales of more than \$25 million.

What can my colleague say to reassure them?

• (2215)

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Meat Council supports free trade and wants to see tariffs eliminated. It wants the tariffs on beef, pork, and other meat products of almost 14% taken away. It wants to see more market access granted, which is tackled in CETA.

Of course, there are always going to be small irritants about names and geographical issues when we deal with the Europeans, but that is also true here in Canada. There is a dispute resolution process that would find a way through this, so there would still be the opportunities we need for our meat sector.

As was pointed out, Maple Leaf Foods, a major meat processor in Manitoba that is handling pork right across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, is looking forward to having opportunities to access that market and maintain the employment levels it has created in Brandon. We know this would also provide great opportunities for expansion of the hog industry in the Prairies.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to a previous question that I asked one of the member's colleagues, with respect to the legislation itself.

Let there be no doubt that there is an expectation by the public that this European trade agreement will be converted into a piece of legislation that will ultimately allow Canada to move forward on the trade agreement.

Very simply, given the many words that have been said here this evening, can Canadians expect to see the trade legislation before the end of the year? Is the member in a position to indicate that we would in fact have some sort of legislation before the end of year with respect to the EU trade agreement?

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, one thing that I am hearing from both the Liberals and the NDP is that they want to see the enabling legislation.

The agreement itself is online. All of the restrictions that have been placed by the provinces are attached to that agreement. Everything we need to know from a technical background on trade, as well as all of the baselines and documents as they pertain to how this is going to be implemented, is already available. Canadians can see it. The enabling legislation, when it comes forward, would only duplicate what is already published online. This whole idea that they have to see the legislation before they should support any motion is ridiculous. Everything has been made public. We have been extremely transparent.

When legislation comes forward, they will have the opportunity to vote on it, but right now we have a motion before the House that encourages the opposition to make up their minds and support agriculture and trade, otherwise they are going to use weasel words to get out of showing any intention of supporting agriculture across this great country.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. He certainly talks very eloquently. There is no question that he knows a great deal about red meat, because he comes from that area and represents folks from that area extremely well, because of his family background there.

I wonder if my friend would talk about the seafood industry, because a lot of folks talk about a lot of different things in agriculture and quite often the seafood industry is one that gets totally overlooked. It used to be like the wine industry before we made sure that the current government understood there was a wine industry in this country and that the agriculture committee actually got an opportunity to speak to them.

I wonder if my friend across the way could explain to Canadians whether the seafood industry really does as well as the red meat sector

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, the principles and fundamentals for market access apply the same in seafood industry as others, including for getting tariffs out of the way and providing market access to over 550 million new customers. This is something that is incredibly important to the seafood industry. It is something that it would be able to capitalize on and benefit from.

Again, this is the NDP trying to distract from the real purpose of what the debate here today is about, which is agriculture, trade, and opportunities for our farmers from coast to coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before I recognize the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, I must inform him that there are three minutes left for debate on the motion.

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

• (2220)

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was not expecting that. I thought I would have at least 10 minutes to speak about the matter at hand, namely, the report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. I will stick to the key points.

I asked the member of the government party questions about a fundamental issue, namely the ability of our farmers to compete with European farmers on their own turf. Of course, the government talked about opening markets. We are going to open our own agricultural markets to European producers. At this point in the analysis, my understanding is that there will be no subsidies to compensate for European products being exported here to Canada.

However, our products, whether we are talking about dairy, beef, pork or grain products, could and should be sent to Europe but will have to compete with products that are subsidized. We are not talking about small subsidies. The direct and indirect subsidies that the European Union gives its farmers represent 40% of the European Union's budget or 39 billion euros.

When we talk about supply management, about protecting it and about opportunities for other products to reach the European market, we have to consider the fact that our products will not be competing on a level playing field. I agree that our producers can handle the business-related challenges of exporting their products, but they need a chance to do that in a fair competitive environment.

This problem underlies the issue of protecting supply management. The pillars of supply management will not change, but the new foundation, especially in terms of new import quotas, will be a game changer for dairy producers.

Different parties speak out in favour of supply management. We strongly support supply management, and we have proven it time and time again. While columnists, politicians and commentators have said that we should eliminate supply management, institute a free market and bring in American and European products, I remind members that our agricultural subsidies were practically eliminated under the Liberal government.

I was in Cancun in 2002, I believe, when the Liberal government was all set to completely eliminate supply management until the

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Doha Round was cancelled because developing countries were reluctant.

However, supply management remains a key issue in the NDP's assessment of this agreement, and that is why I was very pleased to second the subamendment proposed by the member for Pontiac, which would give us a fundamental answer to a fundamental question: where is that compensation for this agreement that the federal government promised to dairy farmers?

I do not see how we could support the terms of this agreement without having the information that the government promised us a long time ago.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me a few minutes to share my thoughts.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

• (2225)

The question is on the subamendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the subamendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the subamendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Pursuant to Standing Order 66, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 19, 2014, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

[*English*]

It being 10:27 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:27 p.m.)

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